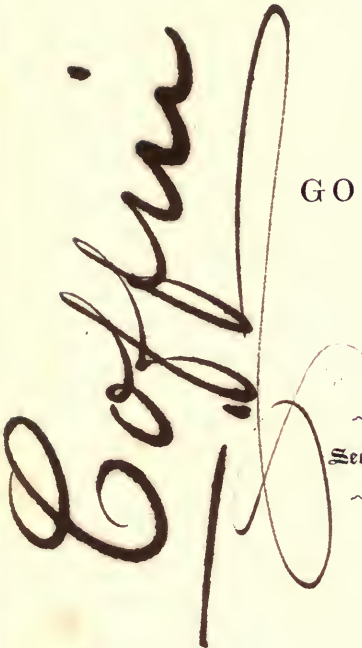




P O E M S .

BY

GOLD-PEN.



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Second Edition.  
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P O E M S .

W O M A N .

THAT passion which impels us in our youth—
In our warm wooing season—is a cheat :
It doth dethrone grave Reason, and exalts
Fancy unto her seat; and Fancy, crowned,
Doth busily use her sceptre. Waving quick
The magic wand, some spirit riseth up,
Adorned by every virtue, but unmarred
By any fault. This spirit we invest
Straightway in some familiar form of flesh,
Then offer to it reverence, knowing not
'Tis but a net we woven have ourselves.
No actual charms or merit, howe'er great,
If only human, long can fill the place
Of what we deemed perfection ; nor can joys,

Though reaching to the summit of man's lot,
Attain the height of mere imagined bliss:
Then comes revulsion, and we stand again
On the bare earth, from our high airy flight
Harshly let down. This life's reality,
By new cares added to our former stock,
Is proven; while our vision's fallacy
Is not kept up by an unbroken sleep.
Now is the time we must again begin
To build, while yet the ruins scattered lie
From our first thought, blocking our onward path:
And, if we weigh them all, we then shall find,
United, that they equal not that left.
The true possession of a heart's regard,
Is more than all those unreal fantasies
Which but a touch of actual life dissolves.

But though this be the experience and route
Which man must struggle thro', which he must pass,
Ere he can rest his love on solid base,
Woman is not led by so far a round.
Her first love changes less in hue and shape,
Founded not so much on delusive sense,
Which doth depend on circumstance without.
It at the first springs from a deeper source,

And is more pure. It changeth not its course
From slight obstructions thrown up in its track,
Though they be real, but doth o'erflow them all.
What seems to man's quick delicate sense a thing
To pause at, or shrink back from in disgust,
Her deep intenser passion swallows up
And burieth in love. Not for weak praise,
Nor that the echoes of stale flattery
Shall in due time come back to mine own ear,
Do I thus speak. Nor is it to fill up
My page for shallow fancies crude, unreal,
That now go hungering through the world for food—
It is of wedded love I speak, long tried.

And in this I do but exalt God's works,
For he hath so adorned her and seen fit
To fortress in her bosom as its place
And sanctuary here, the truest love.
She hath her faults, and laid both in that scale
Which weigheth not one virtue but sums all
We both alike to utter want sink down.
Yet even where such frailties and defects
Do cover her without, that to the eye
Looking but casually, there seemeth left
Naught to allure—even there, if we could pierce,

Beneath all these, would lie the faculty
Idle or to some secret object bound,
Of deathless and self-sacrificing love.

I would not paint that picture which leaves out
A mutual imperfection. Life is still
But as before—a stream that struggles on
Through a low rocky channel, fretting oft
O'er shoals and narrows to a boundless sea.
Thou never wilt have learned so well as then
How fast we are bound to mortality.
For, as our lot goes on unfolding still,
It is God's purpose that we should discern
That there is nothing unmixed here. A taint,
An earthen tinge discolours every drop.
There is not one delight so fenced about
And separate in its single purity,
But we may look from it when at its height
With longing eye to where 'twill be more pure
Or quite lost, midst more satisfying joys.
Yet here 'tis His design for a brief space
We should abide, and all his ordinances,
If mixed with faith in Him, are for our good.
If thou canst cherish then one, as thyself,
Who, in respect of all that seems to lift

Above this world, will soon be lowered down
To thine own level, but who in some gifts,
And first that one of loving, is made rich,
Take her! But take her not if thou wilt frown
On the reality when from her fall
Those unreal, weak imaginings, wherewith
Thou hadst invested her, not at her call,
But of thyself, covering all frailties o'er.

He hath my pity who on woman looks
As she is in our midst and findeth not
That in her heart which moves his own to praise.
And though I speak it not, the unseen hand
Which ordereth every man in our esteem,
Putteth him down to a far lower place
Who weighs her lightly in dishonoring speech.
When the blue vault, with all its stars disclosed,
Or the majestic mountain, or the plain,
Or the low flower, are seen not or unfelt,
'Tis not the fault of nature, but the lack
Of the illumined eye in him that looks:
So by the wisest is she best beloved
And prized by him who knows what true wealth is.

SPRING.

EVEN while I write she comes! As by the side
Of the smooth river watching, oft I see
The breeze approach with ripples and white crests,
So we discern her presence hast'ning up
From the far south. Or shall I her compare
To one whose task it is to beautify?
Like the bride decked for the near nuptial hour,
She circles round the great bare earth with flowers.
Or painter shall I call her, laying on
Bright colors, mingling every tint with skill?
She cometh like a Princess, with her train
Of singing birds attended. Where the fields
Lay brown and barren 'neath long Winter's reign
She calls the tender blade—gardens and grounds
For summer pleasures, claiming from the waste,
And the sweet narrow path lost in the wood
'Midst autumn's leaves tracing out plain again.

The grave she spreadeth with fresh covering.
Ever she finds some new one, where before
'Twas smooth when she went by. She passeth not
The lowly resting place, nor yet the bed
Of him who here was rich. Alike o'er both
She soweth thick, emblems of life renewed.

Ah, when shall she find mine? On what return
Will it lie near her path? Beside what stream,
Or 'neath what spreading tree shall it be made?
How soon, as I write now of those just gone
Shall others write of me? Ponder, my heart!
Take not life's shortened thread but to bind up
Poesy's fading flowers. Although thy steps
Be told not in thine ear, nor the days left
Unfolded to thy sight, yet as he goes
Who hast'neth by the seaside to embark,
So nearest thou thy change. Hast thou been washed
In Blood? and doth th' impoverished soul put on
Another's Righteousness? Then shall this Spring,
This hour of nature's laughter, faintly show
The blest awaking thou shalt know in heaven.

TEMPTATION.

ONE brief half hour! half of its little round,
Upon my watch's face the hand must go
Ere it shall be complete, my time of toil!
'Twas set apart divided from the rest,
As a just portion, but so nearly done,
Shall I not leave my task? Must I still drag
Through those few weary moments, till it reach
The mark appointed, ere I can be free?

Life is a battle; rather, may I say,
Successive conflicts waged in every hour.
The earnest effort would abate its force,
The feeble one would cease to strive at all.
Each sense that hath its home within the flesh,
Each faculty that buildeth up the mind,
Breedeth temptation. If I would but feed
My necessary appetite, too much

I take, and surfeiting abate my strength.
 Or using such gifts as do serve my task,
 They leave it for ambition, soaring up
 Beyond their lawful flight for evil fruit.
 So do we walk through life, our way beset
 By foes unnumbered, who not sword nor spear
 Do lift against us—but would draw aside,
 By moments at the first—then evermore
 From the straight path that leadeth to the end.
 If we do yield, though quickly to return,
 We rob ourselves of so much at the goal;
 But often yielding, we at length shall lose
 That keen desire for progress which fills him
 Who on all paths best steps the hindrance o'er.

Temptation is the tide 'gainst which we tug,
 The invisible hand that presseth at our breast,
 The mire that holds our feet—the crushing load
 That to the footway bends our shoulders down.
 It scattereth stones where most the path is smooth;
 Holds up bright pictures to the right and left;
 Weaveth cool bowers, and pours out crystal streams,
 That trickle just beside the sultry road.
 It useth virtue's aims and God's own works
 Of beauty, for a bait t' entice the soul.

We listen to its words, then stop the ear ;
We do but taste, and fling the draught away ;
We pluck a blossom but to note its hue,
Thinking not we are led thus to the fruit.
She sendeth first a thought—an airy thing,
Whose footsteps make no sound in passing by—
It fleeth swiftly, and from sight is gone.
Then not so dim it visits us again
More palpable its shape. It lingers now
A little longer in the admiring mind.
Soon it becomes a frequent guest—then dwells
There as its home. Next, what was but a thought
Tempts us in substance, and the deed is done.
So doth she win, by gradual advance,
Her first wound scarcely felt, and in its turn
Each one succeeding given as we can bear.

How canst thou war against a foe that brings
A host against thee, not in open rank,
Where thou mayst look on them and weigh their
strength;
But who posts at each avenue to the soul,
One to delude by threats or flattery ?
How canst thou sift the whisperings in thy ear ?

How canst thou pierce the warriors of the mind?
How rend chains that acknowledge not thy touch?

Hath not our Father waiting legions too?
Cannot He muster battling host 'gainst host?
Yes! at his word, they hem his own about,
Who know not of the conflict round their souls.
Whene'er thou dost escape, or to the fight
Standing dost conquer, it is but by Him!
How oft beset, we halt upon the road,
Seemingly left alone, when driven back
Our foes divide and leave an open way!
So are we brought on by Him—every wound
Telling of progress—Oh! that all our words
Might utter praise!

M O R N I N G .

MY Pillow! how oft through the silent hours
Hast thou upheld, as in the lap of peace,
This weary head? When for day's wasting cares
Came pleasant visions, or that deeper sleep
Which most doth rest the tired mind, and bring
Back to the body strength that toil had spent.
Or, fairer yet, those viewless angel forms,
That nightly from the heavens come hov'ring down,
To camp about the resting-place of those
Who do fear God. They wait beside the bed
Of such in lowly places, in the cells
Of prisons damp, out on the heaving deep,
Or in the sumptuous chambers of the rich—
Where'er it be, the angels, while they sleep,
Do watch beside them, noting not the place,
Its loneliness, nor want nor grandeur there,
But looking on the heart kindred by love.

This is the dawning time. The early light
That comes before the sun, doth but dilute
And faintly tinge the darkness. I awake
And hear no sound. Then on the stony street
The wagon rumbles, lonely, from afar,
Freighted with fruits from distant smiling fields.
Soon passeth by the quick and sounding tread
Of the head-workman, early at his post,
The beams grow bright, and with soft call arouse
Thousands from sweet rest! Now they are let in
At chamber windows. Upright on the bed,
Propped amid pillows, wrapped and tied about,
The baby babbling sits, while from their tasks
Those who around put on their day's attire,
Oft run to chirrup and clap hands with him!

But from the sick man's room th' unwelcome beams
Are driven back, and one pale slender ray
Is given entrance. He has found, at length,
The wished-for slumber. Heavily sounds his breath;
Th' array of vials in disorder round,
May not be righted now. A form steals in
On tip-toe, casting first an anxious glance
Upon the sleeper—motions then to her,
Who watcheth by him to her turn of rest.

Tread softly ! breathe not loud, lest he awake !
Is he a Christian, he for whom Death fights ?
Oh ! what a mighty foe, and what small force
We muster 'gainst him in the battling hour !
A feeble woman armed with mixtures, draughts,
Drops and dilutions that the well man scorns ;
Is this all we can bring ? Must he, beloved,
The tender father, or the only child,
The warrior, or the monarch from his throne,
Come thus to die, not compassed round with power,
But in a closed-up chamber, all alone ?
Arm me, then, for this hour ! If kingly might,
Or riches, or the wealth of intellect,
Can cope not with it, cover o'er my soul
With armor heavenly tempered. In my hands
Place those keen weapons that fight not with flesh,
But which are spiritual, for I here
Would rather win than all the field beside !

THE CHEERFUL MIND.

WHY is it that I walk not in the light
When it is shed upon my path? Beams fall
From heaven—from its high throne to guide my feet,
They make the way plain, yet I tread it not.
How beautiful it is when from the lips
No bitter word is heard! How love springs up
For him who silent waits when envious thoughts
Would move to unkind speech! Yet knowing this
Do I put fetters to my tongue, or drive
Back to its evil source suspicion's charge?
There is a world beside that seen without,
An atmosphere which not the lungs do breathe,
Yet in which we do live. From mind to mind,
From heart to heart the currents ebb and flow
Of feeling; underlying all we see,
As the deep earth which neither burns nor blooms,

Yet doth it send up from its secret depths
Such fruits as have from it a natural birth.

Behold, how through fair fields, midst vales and hills,
The widening rivulet doth trace its course;
It maketh green the earth far from its path,
While o'er its glassy bosom many a mile,
Hang bending trees, where birds do build their nests.
At intervals, too, sounds the busy wheel,
Which falling on it drives. The mossy mills,
Like sentinels, are posted to its source.
To them the husbandman doth bear his grain
Which first these waters nourished in the field.
So is it with Love's river through the heart,
Enriching, beautifying all the plain.
Would'st thou not have it there, and make wide room
That, not pent up nor troubled, it might flow?
For though our breasts are hidden from man's eye,
And we may cover them from nearest friends,
Yet we must look within. The prospect there
Is our familiar view, and if not fair
We reap the evil harvest day by day.

There are those who do oft abhor themselves,
And who, if they might turn from their own thoughts,

As from another's presence, would neglect
Of choice such morose company. Alone
They walk, and that in conscious bitterness:
Blessings strung round their necks, hands filled with
good,

The offerings of love, and all those charms
That nature wears without, cannot undo
The fetters on their spirits, which as chains
Hold them forever to some galling thing.
Strange is it that, for such, affection still
Hath bonds and grapples that may not be loosed.
Unkindness, nor that harsh repulsive look
Which as its own the crabbed temper wears,
Are not enough to shake off her tight grasp.
So do we see that faithfulness brought forth
Which God hath hidden deep in woman's heart,
Against the day of need. She stands in love
A very miracle, and knows it.
Why didst thou woo her from the parent nest,
Paving her way therefrom with many vows,
If but to fail her too confiding step?

Yet not the railing charge would I here bring—
It ill befitteth me—nor train my tongue
To fluent accusation; better far

As friends together let us muse upon
One nature, whose infirmities we share,
And equally divide. Know'st thou then not
As the bright sun reviveth with his light
Each green blade and each spot he looks upon,
Working out for himself a most fair view,
So doth the cheerful mind? Caves, dark before,
He makes effulgent; crystals hanging there,
And hidden gems, greet and send back his beams.
He looketh in the Spring-time on some spot
Withered, or by the nipping frost left bare,
And life starts forth! The mind hath influence!
That is more subtle. Where no outward light
May find room doth it pierce. Not one strong-hold
Where hides the evil trait—not one recess
Where dwelleth virtue, but it entereth there.
Minds are made kindred by a nearer tie
Than that which binds us closest in the flesh.
Brothers long sundered may each mem'ry lose,
And careless meet or part, but never yet
Hath mind communed with mind wholly unmoved.
If it be so, how should we shed upon
Those who turn ever toward us, looking up,
For what shall succor—kind beams day by day!

UNBELIEF.

I HAVE been tempted to repine, and doubt
Ever comes nearly yoked with discontent;
For if I murmur and do fault my lot,
Though I refuse to speak the open charge,
Yet he who shapes that lot goes not unblamed.
And though I bar the door against such thought,
Yea, though it knocketh not—without it there
My love within, burns by a fainter flame.
Can I esteem this life bestowed on me,
As but an evil gift, and look upon
The pain that sometimes wounds it, as a thing
That more than weighs down all its part of good?
Can I thus judge, and daily from His hand
Receive my portion, honoring my God?
Beware, my soul! thou hast an enemy
Who comes not undisguised with open front,
But who invisibly doth entrance gain,

And where gush up the secret springs of thought,
Flings in the bitter drops of unbelief.

Oh, what a magic glass the Tempter hath,
By which our sorrows do as worlds appear
But blessings thinly scattered grains of sand!
Dispel the cloud, and let pervading light
Illume my contemplations, oh, my God!
Let me, who do in truth¹ revere thy Name
And honor Thee, in no way lean to him
Who is thy sleepless foe. All hardships here
Help me to bear as burdens that are light
When weighed against my true and just desert.
And oh, more than the rest, arm me against
That dark allurements which would lead me forth
Finite, into the infinite abyss
Of secret purposes, known but to Thee,
Lest I should there demand things unrevealed
And all to high. As but a little child
Fence round my simple and unquestioning faith.
Rob me of whate'er seems to be a gift,
(But is in truth my poverty and want),
If it would bare what thou still keepest veiled,
Or, for my blindness, lessen filial love!

OCTOBER.

THE woods are changing now. Where it was green,
As one vast tremulous covering o'er them thrown
Are grouping many colors! Yellow here
Softens the yet fresh foliage—tints of brown
There mingle with the faded, falling leaves.
While farther off an Evergreen, that stands
Unchanged amid the host, as to proclaim
The autumn too, doth hold aloft a vine
That crept up undiscerned in summer's days,
But now is changed to crimson. See its wreaths
Clothe half the trunk, and through the spreading
boughs

Peep out at intervals with gorgeous hues!
Behind this narrow strip of woods is shown
But half disclosed—the autumn field of corn,
Covered with standing shocks. Still farther off
The denser forest closes in the scene,

A thin blue haze o'ermantling it. The sky
Is checkered with huge piles of snowy clouds,
Which make more deep its azure.

Here a tree
Of ample girth, and towering from its base
To a great height, hath covered all the ground
With a new verdure. Look, where broken twigs
With boughs torn off, and yawning bruised burrs
Are intermingled wide beneath its shade!
This is the Chestnut, that the village boys
Have misused for its fruit, and now it stands
Amid the tatters of its sullied dress,
Like one hard pressed, yet victor in the fight.
Their fathers, and their fathers yet again,
Gathered here in its youth as they do now;
And to successive generations thus,
It yields, untired, a plenteous repast.

Down in the meadows low, a mile away,
The fog hangs o'er the ground. Whence did they rise
And group thus, those impalpable particles
That, what in presence seems to have no form
Or substance, so removed can cheat the eye,
Assuming visible shape? All nature's realms,

Her hidden haunts, and her revealed domains,
Are stored with atoms, forces, influences,
Which we discern not. But the power of God,
Going forth midst all, the near and the remote,
By day and night, demands from every one
Its own appropriate offering and service.
The little that we know, amid the things
That secret are, is like this melting mist
Compared with the great earth on which it rests.
There is no object touched or taken in
By the most casual glance, but that it hides
Some depth we may not fathom. Knowing this,
How should I feel, as daily I behold
The mysteries round me, mine own littleness!
How willingly I should repose in Him,
Who thus, as through a veil, reveals his power,
My trust! These wonders were not framed in vain.
Whatever purpose else in his design,
The earth, the starry heavens, were to fulfil,
They are for me spread forth as witnesses,
Ever proclaiming an invisible God,
And teaching me to fix on Him my faith.

EVENTIDE.

THIS is the hour when, far back in old time,
Isaac, at eve, walked forth to meditate.
Amid green fields he walked, with lowing herds
Far scattered round him. Who can tell how oft
At this same hour, through all the ages since,
Lone wanderers amid like solitude
Have mused with holy thought as he did then?
There is an influence uttered not, but strong,
That Nature doth shed forth to win men now,
And they do yield to it, yet knowing not
The softened fetters nor the leading hand.
I tread not the green fields, but on the brink
Of the steep shore, beside the river's flood,
I sit me down alone. The many winds
That play by day and night o'er this expanse,
All are departed—leaving the wide plain
Smooth as a mirror. In the distant west

The sun goes down ; his brightest rays are gone,
And clouds that did receive him passing through
With gorgeous colors, faded once again,
Deepen in purple as he far descends.
But, scattered through the heaven outspread above,
Lone, loftier clouds still catch the crimson tints
And cast their shadows in the tide below.
Look at the scene ! That purple wall again,
Built 'gainst the west, inverted now we see.
Those forests that the opposite shore do fringe
Are doubled, each tree spreading dark beneath ;
While over all the glassy surface spread
At intervals, the red clouds of the sky
Are pictured, yet more soft, deep—deep below !
The heavens grow dark—between those crimson spots
The answ'ring waters blacken, and the stars,
Just shown above, I see relighted there.
Oh beautiful ! Can I no farther reach ?
Often thus far I've come and looked upon
The works spread round me, till they filled my soul,
And every capable sense it doth contain,
With the acknowledgment of nature's charms.
But ever with them seems to come a bar—
A barrier to some farther sought advance.
They are most beautiful, yet they impart

No other speech to me, no larger being!
I pause upon the brink of the beyond,
And am not satisfied! My soul still thirsts
For something more. As far as they extend
'Tis well, and fills me with a deep delight,
Yet that which whets the spirit's appetite
Not satisfies its hunger! Ah, my soul,
Be thou content to learn what this would teach.
Nature is not thy God. It holdeth not
The final good, yet coming from God's hand
Would win us to him. It is not prepared
To take the place which He alone can fill
Upon the heart's yet vacant throne of love:
Nor are the charms so thick about thee spread
That whereon thou must feed! Toil is thy lot,
Labor thy portion. Rest nor pleasure here,
From any visible nor from unseen things
Can be thine occupation clothed in clay;
But in the intervals between the toils
And stern tasks of thine upward pilgrimage,
Nature, with all the viewless, beauteous acts
And works of the Creator, are to help
As glimpses—springs of water by the way,
That lead toward the great river, tasting faint
Of that pure Stream of Life! When then, beguiled

With these beginnings of that final draught,
Thou treadest now no more the path of toil,
But seekest here to linger and draw forth
The soul's full cup of bliss—the stream so sweet
For its true purpose, stagnates to thy taste!
Nature, however woo'd or looked upon,
Will yield but that for which she hath been sent.
I have, then, too much sought to fill my mouth
With fruits plucked from her—in those shaded bowers
Meant to refresh, I have made my abode,
And so I find, by wisdom's ordered rule
Which may not bend for me, that her delights,
Rather than adding more unto their store,
Have lost of what was at the first their bulk.

UNLAWFUL AFFECTIONS.

WHAT weapon wilt thou forge against his peace
Who thinketh that within one wedded heart,
And the sweet circle of his little ones,
Are fortified safe his duty and his love?
Thy enemy, my soul, has darts that reach
Virtue though she seem lifted in her seat
Almost to Heaven. He can charm the eye
To look upon a new, strange face or form,
Or listen to some voice, till in thee roused
Are the beginnings of another love,
Hidden, yet in bad power upspringing there.
Thou coverest it in secret till thy glance
Is noted and returned. The Devil looks
And smiles as lighteth up the guilty flame!
Then followeth unseen, and in lone hours
Suggests to each thoughts of the other's love.
Not so much thou, he saith, the other most

Enamored looks on thee. Thou goest forth,
Thine eye doth sift the crowd; or, when ye meet,
Glance from swift-seeking glance recoils in shame.
No word hath uttered been—the evil thought
Frames for its like, mute language of its own.
Soon thou shalt find the heart which holds in pledge
All thine hath of affection—which, till now,
Was the enthroned one—seems stripped of its charms.
Conscience, in weak attempt, may summon up
A goodly train to plead for it—long years
Of faithfulness that never swerved; sweet traits
And virtues, that like flowers bloomed 'neath the eye,
All clust'ring round a deathless love for thee—
But they have lost their power; the goodly forms
Seem hollow; while by them led blinded thus
One whose regard is sin appears more fair.
Next thou shalt feel the poison eating in
One vital more. The kiss thou plantest on
Thy young child's cheek, when thou hast smoothed
his couch,
Shall not hold all it did—a wintry breath
Shall seem to wither it and make it cold!
Before this thoughts, that ere thy tongue might tell,
It should be plucked forth by the roots, have passed,
Like murd'rers, through thy mind—lust's whisperings

Of what thou would'st do if but once more free.
Hell thickens in thy heart! and now (if still
Thy foot is on the Rock that checks her flood),
Thou wilt behold how yawn and gape her waves
To overwhelm thee; the enormity
Of thy deep guilt—thy nature's helplessness,
Will unfold—and appalled, thou shalt be dumb!

Moor thy bark by the unforbidden shore,
And there abide. Be tempted not to roam
From that fair portion God hath given thee,
Through treacherous seas for fancied climes unknown.
By a kind hand encouraged, thine own fields
Shall yield thee fruits of peace. There shall thy lot
Rise to its height, and loftiest privilege.
But leaving it, weeds soon shall choke its soil;
While from that place thou seek'st, led by a curse,
Thou shalt look back as one who weeps for home.

AMBITION.

WHY should I serve thee, when I know so well
Thy promises are ne'er fulfilled? No cheat
Or low impostor comes to me more bare
Of that on which we would rest our belief
Than thou—not only to my sight disclosed
By mine own losses, but those who have worn
Thy yoke the longest, and received of thee
Thy richest gifts, declare them dross and poor.
Yet do I find so keen an appetite
For thy most empty banquet, that I still
Hunt round thy table for its meanest crumbs.

We do thee homage in our daily walks,
Ordering our dress and gait as to thy whim.
When we would speak for but the interchange
Of casual thought, if there be listeners near,
At thy command, we measure every word.

If we sit silent, yet beneath some eye
Regarding us, then doth our care adjust
Each fold and feature, lest it thee offend.
Within the house of prayer, while we do kneel,
If not supreme, thou second art in power,
Abating from the heart thought of the flesh.
But when it cometh to life's chosen task,
Changing its purpose and its true design,
For thee we bear the burden—put at risk
All God hath loaned us to be used for Him,
And pay a price to be enrolled thy slaves!

Where dost thou sit enthroned? What secret power
Is this of thine that doth throughout prevail
All heights—all depths unto our being's end?
It takes a tithe of virtue; to its aim
Turneth each vice, uniting to one draught
What were abhorrent on another road.
It is my close companion—to the gate
Of Heaven it lurketh after when I soar,
Or by the doors of Hell, gone on before,
It stands and beckons when I do descend.
I cannot be alone! The silent path
Of the mid-forest, where no foot doth tread
But softly mine, or the close bolted room

Alike do, as I enter, let it in.
 Oh! subtle foe, who now I rather give
 Thy humbler, truer name, Self-Love, by thee
 How many wounds I have, and how great loss!

I may not reach thee. Can I separate
 From my full mind its Memory? or at will
 Pluck from Imagination her swift wings?
 So am I helpless 'midst a guilty soul.
 If I can bind ambition, why not pierce
 The sack of hatred's venom? or cut off
 The talons keen of covetousness? Try
 To raise a dam and boundary between
 The sense of beauty and the evil eye!
 Enchurched affection—call the raven back
 When it hath left the ark, gone to and fro!
 Sweep out each dusty spot within my soul,
 And there, henceforth, be pure—let not the thought
 Nor secret act be to the test unclean!
 I may not conquer them—they separate,
 Have power and strong dominion over me;
 Yet is there not one that delights to roam
 This bosom, but my Father holds its chain!

T I M E.

TIME holdeth all things. As the boundless sea
Somewhere within its limits doth contain
Each of the myriad forms there made to dwell,
So past, or here, or yet to come, all acts—
All deeds and strange events—adjusted are
Each to its fitting hour! We look upon
The smallest fragment of the mighty bulk—
One little point in the unmeasured plain,
And are consumed with care. What scope is His
Who measureth from the threshold to the end
By but one glance!

We are as busy ants,
Each lab'ring with his atom! The next field
Is unknown—like another world to us.
By our finite capacities we fall
To our just place; for though at times we rise
Above the level, and have wider view,

Looking by History back, and sending thought
On an uncertain pilgrimage before,
Yet soon we drop again, and the great sum
Of these swift moments are spent 'midst research
Or toils, which, by the bound'ries they embrace,
Are of minutest compass.

Time doth hide

All secrets. It can trace thy lineage back—
Back to fair Eden! Kings are in the line
That is obliterated from thy view,
But marked out on that page. Time too can tell
When thou shalt pass its borders, and name where
Thy dust shall lie. Upon its record writ
Are thy descendants to remotest years.
How many deeds of good and evil there
Shall live, unblotted out! Methinks the page
Where they are graven, is not one, but lined
To right and left. All issuing of thy heart,
From the great deed down to the love that brings
A cup of water, in the fear of God,
Hath honorable place; while where thou hast
From thy youth up served Sin, the tainted thought,
Acted or not, is visibly impressed.
As the secreted lantern falls upon
The painted passing figures and depicts

'Gainst the dark wall, them made more bright and plain,
So all the hidden motions of the mind
Fall pictured on that tablet—not to fade
As fleeting shadows, but to be reviewed
On the great Judgment day!

TEMPER.

AN evil Temper! Seek me out some form
More hideous to behold than aught displayed
By nature 'midst the countless visible shapes
Which she hath placed on earth, and I will show
That evil spirit's likeness. Yet must it
No feature wear that e'er expression gives
To gentleness or mercy. It must be
Of visage that doth fiercely manifest
Unmixed malignity. But there is not
That having substance, of so sour a face
We may compare it to. It dwells within,
A subtle tenant of the mind. The flesh
Is marred by it, yet hath it separate life—
'Tis still immortal when the flesh is dust.
How can I speak of it? What matter fails
In its most loathsome aspect to show forth
How shall I paint in words? I saw a child
Clothed in the thin worn raiment of the poor;
Her head was covered not, her feet were bare,

And thus she sat beneath the open sky
Of a chill, wintry day. At distance stood
The lowly dwelling, which as for her sake
I would have sought, she caught me with her arms,
Her little arms, and wept and begged me stay.
It was this spirit in a father's breast
That drove her forth, that let her pinch with cold,
That made her trembling look at her home's door
As though a lion lurked within!

My heart,
Oh, dost thou house this foul inhabitant,
So loathed in others? Dost thou entertain
What would between thine offspring and the place
Of thy affections lay a naked sword?
Confess, my heart, it dwells within thy doors—
Yea, in thy chiefest chambers! From the throne
It doth at times drag sovereign virtue down
That it may rave at will. Strong is its arm,
And cruel are its shafts—when it doth speak
It lacerates—the sore wound of one word
Bleedeth for years. Oh, wretched tyranny
Beneath which I am born as much as he
Who is its abject captive! Yet in this
I am more blessed than such an one—I know
Who holds the tyrant's fetters, and to Him
Daily approach, nor come unheard away.

THE WEIGHT.

WELL is life likened to a most swift race,
And we to burden bearers, or to those
Who loaded climb some hill. Each hath his weight
That holds him back, and as he casts it off
Another clings with firmer hold. The fight,
If it be not without, rageth within.
If not an arm of flesh doth drag thee down,
One unseen grasps thy shoulder day by day.
Always there is temptation. 'Tis the growth
Spontaneous of the ground on which we tread;
It doth pervade the atmosphere we breathe;
The heart hails it, and as it comes makes room.
Yet is there even 'neath its tainted touch
A patience to attain; not that which bids
It welcome to the breast, or ever rests
In strife against it, but which doth ward off
Discouragement, and 'gainst our lot complaint.

Infirmity is loss, and yet by it
The Christian hath his gain. Cure my disease,
And my Physician will return no more.

There is an envious captive in my mind,
Or shall I call it ruler? Surely not
The highest throne it fills there, yet its seat
Is not unclothed of power. If I flee,
I bear it with me—silent if I sit,
I do but give it rest. No strength of mine
Can cast it out; and He on whom I call,
Permitting still its presence, only saith,
My grace sufficeth for thee. Give me, Lord,
That grace, and while thy purpose holds me here,
Teach me how with corruption to abide,
Nor loving it, nor murmuring—but with hope
So much more ardent, longing to be free.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

WE are hemmed in by possibilities
Of so great evil, that without a trust
In One whose sway doth overreach them all,
Our minds would be companioned but with fears.
My body, hale to-day, may soon become
The lodgement of some most abhorred disease.
My intellect, now in its many parts
Laid like the atoms of transparent glass,
Each in its place, but one in harmony,
May by some shock be so disquieted
That, order and all just proportion gone,
Darkness shall fill the room and place of light.
There is not one possession of my joy
But as it is the more beloved as such,
May so be changed into a heavier woe!
The currents that bring joy and sorrow down
Are viewless, unknown, and beyond our reach.

How could we live and bear the consciousness
That it is thus, 'midst quiet smiling peace,
If we held not this firm persuasion safe,
That not by chance these currents ebb and flow,
But as poured forth or held back by the hand
Of One whose wisdom compasseth our fate—
Who better knows our need? From day to day,
Save but for this, shut in the dark I go,
With treasures both to forfeit and to gain;
Yet never fearful save when letting slip
This sweet belief, I trust in mine own strength.
Then am I tost and sore disquieted,
Seeing how great my hazard, and how weak
I am to combat, o'errule or defend!

SELF-ACQUAINTANCE.

THAT spirit lodged within us, which we bear
Where'er our steps do lead—oft seems most like
The hedge of thorns that seizes on and robs
Some fragment from his garment who goes by.
Or the rough-coated, surly porcupine,
We may compare it to, who lifts his quills,
And as the fable hath it, casts one out
At each offender near him. I go forth
On the great highway, or am mingled with
The housed, refined assembly. Presently
I see one whose heart, gauged upon his face,
Feeds but on his own beauty (though that be
Nowhere but in his thought). Quickly spring up
Bristling contempt and scorn, which, if indulged,
Would make public confession.

Next draws near
Some stiff form and cold frigid countenance

That looks defiant pride. As swift awakes
Incipient hatred in my breast—my eye,
Seeks out its glance, its hauteur to hurl back!
These both passed by, another I behold,
In the coarse sensualist, whose roving glance
Scans all within its reach. Toward him go forth
Loathing and keen abhorrence! But now comes
In my own heart some viewless visitor
Who straightway falls to quest'ning me. He saith,
How dost thou know so well the dress and garb
Of these masked, hateful things? Hast thou felt pride,
And vanity, and passion? Else who taught
Thine eye its quick discernment? Not the cell
Without, the inward culprit stands condemned.
Come, then—before these round thee for one day
Unveil thy bosom! For one fleeting day—
It is a little while! Let them behold
Each secret thought, tracking it to the depths—
Each image cherished, or those thou wouldst drive
Unwelcomed quickly hence. I answer make,
Shall I to such a multitude lay bare
Those locked and hidden chambers? He replies,
Are here too many? I will separate
A few from out their midst—those who look through
The most clear glass of charity—let them

Apart and privily see this sight. I say,
Shall we to strangers take the covering off
From our heart's buried treasures? Then he saith,
Name that one whom thou lovest most on earth,
And who most loveth thee—let him draw near,
And for the span-long period of one day
Stand sentinel o'er thy bosom. I cry out,
Trembling, Spare me this thing! Yea, I will spare,
He saith, but learn while thou mayst reprobate
Sin in itself, he whom thou wouldst condemn
Doth stand on thine own level. In the soil
Of thine own heart lays every bitter root,
Ready to spring up, that bears fruit in him:
They may yet bud and bloom there, and if now
They are restrained, the difference is of grace.

DISCOURAGEMENT TO LABOR.

I CALL, but no form riseth in reply ;
I stand above th' invisible recess
Where dwells the mind and whence her children come—
But it is silent as if now her grave!
And thus it often seemeth. All the shapes
Of vigorous life that do at times crowd hence,
Retreated back so far into the depths,
That the strange faculty so lately mine
To draw them forth, is as forever gone.
Then in what poverty and loneliness
The poet sits above his unstained sheet,
And doubts instead of images do throng,
Doubts whether he shall e'er again behold
The trains of Fancy ! But a certain law,
As with the frame of nature seen without,
Exists too in our spirits. But for this
How should we know, when silently at eve

The sun departs, that e'er returning morn
Would summon us to life and toil again?
Or that our faculties, changed day by day,
Fickle, unstable—would come at our call,
In humor clothed to end the task begun?
Therefore hath He, who with one ruling hand,
Fashioned both flesh and spirit, compassed both
With fixed results which give us assured faith:
And when, in answer to the just attempt,
Success doth cheer me, and repeated oft
Th' endeavor, still it yields the same reward,
I may lean on the hope and firmly trust
That as return the future's stern demands,
So shall be mine the strength that serves its need.

Choose then thy task, not by ambition named,
Nor fancied pref'rence, but by patient search,
Whether the cunning hand, the diligent mind,
Or whatsoever gift, is left with thee.
But know this, that where'er the field is spread,
'Twill often seem unfruitful. Yet toil there,
For thus it is with all. The highest place
As that which we deem lowest, is beset
With like discouragements to the true act
Of labor and th' attainment of success.

Through like experience all the harvest reap,
Which by a law ordained alike for all,
(Though it may once perchance spring up unsought),
Is year by year gained, but through weariness!

THE DREAD OF OUR TASK.

It is not that we so abhor and shun
The effort, or that so we treasure ease—
For rest prolonged is weariness—it is
The dread of being vanquished in the strife,
And after conflict waged amid suspense,
Effecting nothing. 'This so weakens faith
In faculties which oftenest had won,
That we do shrink from the unproved attempt.
Yet flattery of self, or undue trust
In powers that answer not at times our call,
Unfits as much for life's prolonged task
As weak'ning failure. It doth weave twofold
The fetters of discouragement, for where,
O'er confident, we saw but victory,
Defeat will rob us both of present strength
And courage for th' attack which yet might win.

We nurse in our own bosoms—as it were
Between our casual thought and deeper mind—
A secret vanity. It would exalt
That mind beyond the doubt that waits upon
All human effort, and would rather crown
It as a power of some loftier sphere
Which stoops for man's applause, and which, aroused
To the true effort, always wins success.
How empty the delusion! Deeply tinged
With earth, the mightiest streams are, flowing here ;
Those fields most fruitful, quickest send up weeds,
And in the harvests of the intellect
No husbandman but reaps his mingled store.
He garners not at large the golden sheaves,
But winnows out with toil the scanty fruit.

THE HOPE OF HEAVEN.

'Tis better to depart! Thus was it said
By one who wisdom drew from a high source,
And so unnumbered hearts that daily drank
At the same Fount, have said since he was gone.
They too, each in his turn, have been released;
Still is it heard on earth, and last from me,
'Tis better to depart! Why is it so?
Is not health mine? Do not endearing ties
Wrap round in many a fold to bind me here?
Have I not what is oftenest denied,
Nor poverty, nor riches—not th' excess
Of freedom, nor the tyranny of want?
Yes, and great store beside of many things
That smooths man's path, and do adorn his lot,
Are given me—yet midst them all I feel
'Tis better to depart! Oh, there is not
One duty fully done! No evil wish

Is thwarted quite, both in the thought and deed.
In each relation that unites me here,
Close or more distant, with my fellow man,
I do come short or o'erstep duty's mark.
My evil things are unmixed, and my good
Are tainted—so beneath Sin's heavy load
I journey on amid this clouded scene.
Then, when beside my path, shown to my heart
That better land doth, dimly pictured, rise,
Whither Christ's flock is tending—there to lose
Each clinging weight, even to the least—I feel
'Tis better to depart!

But this is not
God's plan. It was no part of his design
That I should spend this day in heaven, or wear
To-day the glorious dress. I am still here—
Some work remained undone when rose this morn.
And this shall be my constant thought—not yet,
It is not yet the time! But is there not
In the sure expectation of a thing,
Though we do linger still a busy hour,
Ere we depart for it, foretasted joy?
Is it as nothing nightly to lie down,
And feel, while shuts the eye, that not a fear

Floats as a cloud before the Judgment Throne?
Shall I forget, nor count it in the sum,
That Panoply in which I do walk clothed,
By which I look within this bound-up frame,
And to the beating heart say, No keen pang
Of thine can me alarm; to every part,
Each vital, delicate organ, None of you,
Though pierced with swift disease, can work my fall?
Yea, these are gifts that should make what remains
Of life a pleasant waiting!

N A T U R E .

A FROG upon the margin of a spring!
Part of the furniture by Nature placed
To quite complete this still, inanimate scene.
What sentiment, thou green and croaking thing,
Can I now gather from thy panting form?
If thou couldst tell thy history, no lack
Of subject would there be, lone sentinel!
Here is a world we think not of. From here—
This little fount—this basin ever full—
How many draw new life up day by day?
The tortoise comes here, pauses on the brink,
And drinks—in that one necessary act
Perfect by instinct as we are by thought.
What small proportion of full rational thought
Is in the impulse which doth it impel
To turn, amid the far off furrowed field,
And truly, by an unmarked lowly path,

Seek the wet margin of this hidden spring?
The infinite irradiations sent
Of intellect through all the countless ranks
And orders of his creatures, God doth know,
And He alone the measure marks of each.

Now, while I stand beneath the shade, methinks
This is misnamed a silent solitude;
For countless voices from the mossy ground
Rise up around me—not the din of trade,
But the loud humming of the insect world,
As busy here as man is where he dwells.
Hark, from the trees! birds to each other call,
And, though they know it not, carol to me.
Far as my eye can through the forest reach,
I see bright beams from the meridian sun
Fall here and there between the parted boughs,
Check'ring the green and pathless floor beneath.

Often, when pent within the city's walls,
And scenes like this have risen in my thought,
I have believed that, could I thus but stand
Free amid nature and her outspread works,
My thirst were satisfied. I stand there now—
The visible reality more full

Of beauty than the unreal picture was.
Am I then satisfied, and is that thirst
For something yet untasted quenched within?
Oh, no! the Stream I parch for flows not here!
Why do I cheat myself and promise still
My heart this comfort? yet not all deceived,
For well I know, as to my final faith,
And those last joys which only can be full,
That heaven alone shall yield them. Still I find
From day to day, as on life's path I go,
Impatient to have nothing, that I look
For some repose at each turn of the way,
And so reap disappointment. Better far,
Both for the sake of duty and content,
To tell my heart, and crown it with belief,
That here it hath no portion, but must go
Stripped, save of hope, unto the journey's end.

And yet, oh! Nature, did He not spread forth
Thy fair green fields, and rear thy mountains up,
Who placed within us the discerning mind
To see their beauties? Did He thee adorn,
And give us eye, and ear, and answering sense,
To feel delight when looking in thy face,

That this sweet harmony between us both
Should be but void and empty ?

Thou lookest on some fragment of the Past—
Some carved sarcophagus which hid hath lain,
Covered up, unknown for a thousand years ;
And the dim fancies that around it throng—
Fictions upsummoned but from thine own brain,
Give it an interest. But when, in thy search
Through all its parts, the closer scrutiny
Reveals some strange inscription that doth tell
Who laid there in his ancient sleep of death,
Giving the name and lineage of a king—
How doth that interest deepen into awe !

Thus once I walked beside a murmuring brook
In early youth (I know the stream yet well,
And where far through a wooded glen it winds),
Feeling a consciousness of strange delight
Indefinite, such as I could not speak
The nature of, nor the source whence it sprang.
Yet as I followed on its grassy brink,
Noting its falls and eddies—leaping now
Across its bosom to the firmer side—
Now sitting down beneath some spreading tree,

Gazing and listening to its gentle song,
There was imparted to my childish soul
A sense of beauty and a real joy.
This was the first touch of that answering chord
Placed in my bosom—the first opening
Of that perception which notes nature's charms!
But as I grew, and this instinctive sense
Deepened with years, it was made known to me
That all these charms were fashioned by the hand
Of one who loved me; and that Nature stood
Robed as she was, not to embody forth
Some unknown God, some dim unformed belief
That we, kept back from any near approach,
Should darkly worship her, or Him in her;
But wrought out by God's hand veiled from my sight,
To witness of his present power and love.
As thou wouldst walk amid mementos spread
From one beloved, yet hidden from thine eyes,
So walk I amid nature! and if now,
After a circling pilgrimage of years,
My steps were led back to that early stream,
Not by the mind's maturer growth alone,
But by this new interpretation given,
Would all its beauties show to me more fair.

THE POET TO HIS BOOK.

Go from my heart forth, wafted to and fro,
Seeking a resting-place! A wand'ring voice
That whispers in the ear when all is still,
Or as a viewless hand that doth reach in,
Touching the spirits' chords! If thou hast power
T' awaken there one glad, resounding note
Of gratitude and new thanksgiving—Live!
But if thou only canst defraud the soul
Of golden moments, yielding no return
Of wisdom or of purified desire,
Then be thy life brief as a falling star,
Even though as beautiful! Say that thou com'st
From him who sends thee, not demanding fame,
That with such portion thou mayst back return
To yield him service—but the messenger
Of blessings that he fain with all would share.
As he who, when Spring first hides in the wood,
Beareth the cage unto the forest's edge,
And lets his winter prisoners go free,

That they may seek nests where to rear their young,
So 'midst the great world do I now send forth
Thoughts that have tarried long—hoping they may
Find lodging-place in many hearts, and rear
Yet holier brood! The small and dwarfish shoot,
If laid in richer soil, will sometimes lose
Its likeness to the last degenerate stalk
From which 'twas severed, and will grow again
In form and height more like that towering plant
From which it first descended. Let my words
Hold but the lowest office—ope the doors
To richer treasures not my own, or light
With their faint spark an all-surpassing flame,
So that they some way do impart that Hope
In which they have their being. I would choose
Rather to win one spirit—though unknown
To it, its benefactor—than to have
Plaudit and commendation from all minds
For powers most rarely given. Yet in this
I am most selfish, only that my store
Is hoarded in another world, where all
That must remain here will, I know, be lost.
Therefore, as doth the miser hide his pence
With keener relish than some squander gold,
So pass I, secretly exulting, now
Great riches, for one mite that shall endure!

THE FAMILY VAULT.

HERE, with its face upturned, the mouldering flesh
Waiteth the Judgment. Those unpitying cares
Which did begrudge it once a moment's rest,
Fallen on other shoulders, or gone out—
Nothing when lost their victim—reach it not.
How still it is! Motionless, side by side,
The leaden coffins that each form inclose
Lie still from year to year. I knew him well
Who sleepeth in this nearest one. * * *

Lo, what company! A little while,
And all this floor was empty. Day by day,
They rose up and laid down as I do now,—
They mingled with each other, came and went,
Loved, and, it may be, harbored other thoughts,
With looks estranged, and all th' unuttered, mute,
Yet eloquent intimations from the mind
Which tell the bitter feeling; now they lie

Harmless enough! No keen or kindly word
Comes from their lips—ah, the few years they passed
In life together were a little space
To this long, still companionship of death.
Think of it, oh, my soul! Does there breathe one
For whom thou feelest hatred, not confessed—
Yet hatred traced back to its secret source?
Remember how ye will together lie
Thus side by side; for though ye slumber not
Within one common vault, yet it will be
In earth's great tomb that waits for all mankind.

Am I prepared to take my lodging here?
Can I await the Resurrection Morn,
Bound in the fetters motionless of death,
In confidence and calm abiding hope?
This is the place to ask such question—here,
The world shut out, and each poor dazzled sense
Helped to look inward by the solemn scene.

I trust, then, that I am. Not that my life
Can bear the sifting and the scrutiny
Which shall befall it on the Judgment Day,
But that the impure dress which covers it,
As with corruption, to th' all-seeing eye
May be made spotless! In my consciousness,

I am accused, and by myself condemned
Of every sin. There is no evil charge
But its reflection or its counterpart
Is laid bare by a glance at my own breast ;
For God hath torn the mask of pride for me,
And shown me what I am. Not with the sense
Of that keen horror such guilt would inflict
Even in its viewing, to a soul all pure—
Else were life torture ; but he hath so cleansed
My vision that I see what once was hid,
And so discern its deep enormity
That in some measure toward my spirit's strength
Sin in its shape and nature is abhorred.
Shall this new sight, then, or the partial change
Which it doth work out in my practices,
Shield me from retribution still deserved ?
No, this is not my plea ; but I am told
By Him against whom all my error is
That thus confessing it, if I will come
A suppliant to the Cross, the blood which flows
To cleanse the penitent shall cleanse e'en me !

With nothing more, then, than this Promise armed,
Conscious of Guilt—a Judge against myself,
I stand thus fearless in the gates of death.

Here is the couch where these tired limbs shall lie,
And moulder in corruption! No kind hand
Shall tend them; all forgotten from the earth,
As these around are, it shall be with me.
One eye alone shall still mine image keep,
Nor dimming centuries shall blot it out,
Till when the trumpet sounds, uprisen again,
Awaked, renewed, I shall stand at His Bar.
Should I not tremble at my prophecy
Here in the place where it shall be fulfilled?
I do not tremble; but a feeling comes
Once all unknown to me—whisp'ring thought
Of what a sweet repose and rest is his
Who sleepeth here in Jesus!

Oh, when I shall arise from this low bed,
My soul, clothed in some new and glorious dress,
Fitly arrayed to meet Him whom it loves,
How will I bear the thoughts that like a flood
Shall overwhelm me? In one moment brief
Will come the consciousness of death as past,
Of life eternal, unpolluted, blest,
Bestowed and now begun! This is the place,
The bridal-chamber of this destiny—
Should I not love it then, and linger here,
With forward-reaching thoughts of things to come?

THE PRAYER MEETING.

UPON the crowded highway of this world,
He who doth live for its brief space alone,
And he who sees it but a pilgrimage
Toward a better—both together strive.
Their hands join, and their voices mingle o'er
Their common tasks; they both as brethren are
In this impris'ning flesh, whose stern demands
Impelleth all alike to win their bread.
But in this room apart, as in the cleft
Of the protecting rock, a little band
Do meet to mingle hopes that not all share.
Not for the riches of this world they come,
But to send forward wing'd, rejoicing thoughts
Toward their inheritance—to offer up
Their mutual petitions, and give voice
To common praise. That they do thither come,
Proclaims whose name they bear. If unto God

They yield not service, here have they no rest;
But those who come thus, He is pledged to meet.
How holy then this place, and how refreshed
Should each soul be departing!
Oh! shepherds, and oh! flocks, who seek this fold
So oft—seek it prepared! Let no cold hearts
Mar your communion or drag back your prayers
When they would leap to heaven. Remember these
Blest seasons are recorded, and a loss
Or gain attends each one. Not many more,
And thou shalt go where such an hour improved
Shall seem more rich than all earth's mines of wealth.

SILENT INFLUENCES.

THE sunshine silent falls upon the bud,
No voice doth answer, but the secret cell
Within enlargeth, and the embryo hid
Swells and perfects itself to the full flower.
The writer sits in some lone room apart,
He utters there no word, his arm toils not,
He holds his pen, and as an idler seems;
Yet from that quietude do thoughts come forth
That, as with wings, do fly from heart to heart,
O'er the wide world, with moving influence.
It is not by the sound nor show without
We judge of the result. He who doth all,
Curbing this fleeting world and all the stars,
Doeth it silently. 'Canst thou stand forth
Far in the forest, when each early shoot
Peeps from the rugged bark, and every blade
From the moist earth springs up in its own place—

Canst thou hear then a whisp'ring 'mong the leaves,
New waked to life? Or canst thou from on high
Discern the voice that calls them? From the world
That marks the limit of an angel's flight
To this our lower world; from this again
To that most distant in the opposite space,
An unseen silent influence pervades
And orders all things.

THE SINFUL THOUGHT.

THE perfect work is difficult. We turn
From the pursuit of some ensnaring sin
Toward Virtue, and, the strong temptation past,
Speak of our peril as forever gone;
Yet, in the secret motions of desire,
We feel it turn again, with eye of stealth,
And gaze upon the thing that had been left:
Words of renunciation and dislike
Filling our mouths—perhaps the form of prayer,
Against its power; so would an evil heart,
Even in our chains, persuade us we are free!
But we are captive still; nor are we left
Ignorant by that consciousness within,
Which deaf is to the flatteries of sense,
That it is so with us. For we retain,
When freedom to transgress in act is gone,
Proneness to do the same thing o'er in thought,

Or, when not wilfully upon those thoughts,
We summon up the images impure ;
Then when they rise uncalled, we look on them
With gaze prolonged, or the disturbed, quick glance,
Tasting alike in each of the first sin.
This is the guilt that none but God doth know,
'Tis hidden from mankind—Yet hath its wound
The more of peril rankling out of sight.

The heart renewed knows its own bitterness,
Not from the shafts of outward foes alone,
But from those aching hurts and blemishes,
For which it may charge no one but itself.
How do they checker that interior life,
Which passes unrecorded ! Worldly men
Know not our burdens. Who can summon me
To pay what I have knowingly withheld,
Using it as mine own ? Or who can lay
To my account untruth, or bloody deed ?
Yet, when I bare my bosom toward my God,
There is revealed, e'en to my duller sight,
What smites the eye that looks, and bids it weep.

THE STEEPLE.

NEAR to my daily walks, for long months past,
Upon a stately Temple, lab'ring men
A Steeple have been rearing. I have watched
Its gradual ascent until, at length,
What was beneath a wide and ample space,
Hath narrowed to a close and straitened pen,
Wherein but one finds room. Yet do I see
The blocks of stone uplifted to the height,
Each one it narrowing more—till soon, I know,
The last will rest upon its lonely place,
And perfect for all time the work will stand!

So is it with the righteous man, who builds
By holy deeds and prayers, from day to day,
A monument not visible to us,
But witnessed by the angels. Though he builds,
No merit doth he claim—nor for his toil

Demandeth as his own, gift or reward ;
He knows, although it seemeth of his hand,
The work is God's and yields the praise to Him.

And yet, oh, Christian, thus is shaped thy life ;
Each day hath its own place. No voiceless prayer,
No penitent tear dropped noiseless on thy path,
No deed of charity or word of love,
Or trial meekly borne—but it doth add
Another height, or fix adornment there !
Thwart not the Power within that speeds the work ;
Let it be lofty, not for thine own praise,
But His who on its height would write thy name.

THE ORDERINGS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

Too much obscured—wrapt in forgetfulness,
Our past years are. Not that we might alone
Search out from 'midst them by more close regard,
Sep'rate and single blessings, then besought,
Now giv'n and counted not—but that the plan
Which God hath wrought through all the incidents
That do make up our lives, might be made plain.
As he who ordereth the battle, mounts
To some high steep that overlooks the field,
Posting his numbered squadrons here and there—
So He who o'errules all things for our good,
Our path marks from its starting to its end,
Ere we take the first step! There are by-ways,
Though rough, which help us swift advance to make;
O'er rocky heights—between their rugged tops
Lie vales that we must reach for fairest fruits.

What shall I offer Thee, that when I burned
In earlier youth to tread a fearful steep,
Thou then didst chain me to my lowly place?
Thou didst those pinions bruise that would have borne
Me up, but to become a mark and prey
For the Death-Archer. Help me now to speak
Some new thanksgiving! Lo, my altar rose
To a false god. I laid the wood thereon,
And decked the Off'ring—it was my own soul,
But thou didst smite the arm even while outstretched
To light the murderous flame! May I not say
My Harp shall hymn thy praises and my tongue
Utter thy Truth? If thou wilt give me grace,
Then it shall be so—when that is withheld,
The same day I shall fall!

THE POET.

COME up from the soft earth, ye blades of grass,
Ye opening buds that spring in millions come,
Each one a new and wondrous miracle!
And thou, oh Sun, that standest in th' heavens,
Still in the midst! while through the eternal space
We and unnumbered worlds for evermore
Roll round thy light in voiceless company!
Ye worlds, ye sounding floods, ye murmuring rills,
Ye precipices, caverns, solitudes,
Yea, all ye voiced and unvoiced witnesses,
Ever in lofty argument with the soul—
Come, help me magnify the ONE GREAT NAME!

The poet said, What am I in this world
Of busy men? Men who are strong to act,
Who bind each breath of favoring circumstance,
Helped on and wafted to the wished for end!

While I, ashamed and lonely, steal aside
Unnoted, unadapted, useless, weak,
By some inscrutable, deep influence
Still longing for the loneliest of all haunts,
Living but when I am in solitude!

Tell me what hand invisible it is
That through the far-off depths of forests wild
Scatters the seeds of fragrant, tinted flowers—
So that they spring 'midst the untrodden shade
As in a garden, though no eye doth see?
Who is it from the circling firmament
Draweth the clouds at evening toward the west,
And drapes and groups them round the setting sun?
If bare and unadorned use alone
Hath merit in God's sight, then why are these?
Lo, all his works are perfect, both for use
And beauty! Doth the black unseemly ore,
Because of the strong particles it yields,
More speak and magnify the Maker's praise
Than the frail rose that useless o'er it blooms?
Beware! his creatures all have use, and serve
Somewhere within the scale and compass vast
Of his designs, the purpose of their being.

So thou, oh Poet, may not idly pine
Amid these scenes of louder sounding toil,
Nor from them, shrinking to some haunt aside,
Waste, more than the day-laborer, thine hours.
If God hath given thee a different mind
'Tis but for other work! 'Tis thine to bear
The small bright lamp he places in thy hand,
Through the dark paths of Nature and the Soul,
Noting the wonders to thy eye revealed,
That thou mayst on the parting threshold stand
And speak to mankind—an interpreter!
Thy fellows may not leave their toil for this,
Nor thou thy meditation for their gains.

And thou, oh Poet, though thy lot hath been
To loiter thus far on the path of life
Without a purpose, while crowds passed thee by,
Each earnest, burdened with some warm intent,
Till it hath seemed there was no work for thee,
An idler—one in number o'er the plan—
Thou too shalt know the gladness that he feels,
Who sees beneath his busy hand and brain
Some task increase and toward perfection grow,
While every nerve and muscle of the mind
Stretcheth in action!

Can He whose foresight and creative power
Mingle in giving life but to a worm,
So that its place awaits it, and its use
Ere, not alone to be, but to serve both.
That place and use, it cometh from his hand—
Can He have made thee half-way, without aim?

Be patient—learn to wait, yea willingly
To be still as thou art. He measureth
Man's work not by its visible results
But by its fitting to his own high will.
And if that will toward thee, is to approach,
Even as thou art, the grave—there lies thy task—
And toil that thwarts it, is but idleness.

THE DYING HOUR.

OFTEN I think of it. Before the time
It comes to test my labors—clothed in light,
Which, as a borrowed lustre, gilds my works—
Or sometimes wrapt in shadows. Oh, at night,
The lonely, silent night, I have awaked,
And this one thought hath fallen over me
Like horror of deep darkness! All my toils,
Those finished, those yet shaping in my hands,
Then rose and stood as stern accusers forth,
And frightened me—yea, even my holy things
Did threaten me with Hell. But ah, this was
My folly! I saw the deformity
Of my own works, but looked not on the robe
That should with beauty cover them—an awe
It was of God, unmingled with that love
Which casts out fear. But presently again
He taught me I was not a purchased slave,

But an elected son ; not by my toils
To earn salvation, but to have the Gift
Free and unmerited. For all I do
Is tainted, as the pure and heavenly beam
That passeth through discolored gloss is tinged.
Yet am I not to stand with folded arms
(Nor would that cleanse the spot); this is a world
Of action. So 'midst prayers, I day by day
Must onward press, and learn to trust and leave
Even guilt with God.

But sometimes as the Sun
Suddenly filleth all the room with light,
So 'midst the hind'rances that pave my way
In glorious fulness comes the knowledge down
Of my relation—of that filial tie
By which in truth I walk. Oh, then is mine
What freedom ! With what liberty I go !
How doubts and snares, that mountains seemed before,
Melt to the plain ! Like one surprised with strength
Who long hath halt been, as an hart I leap.
But soon, by fault of mine, becomes too great
This liberty—I grow o'er confident.
And so once more, with wisdom temp'ring love,
God letteth pass a cloud.

How changeful then

And dull, some voice will say, must be such life !

Where is its privilege or peculiar peace ?

'Tis not the searching eye can find it out—

The heart must harbor it ! God hath no path

Laid down and measured, as man lays the rule

By which he leads his own : each differeth

In his defects, and needs a separate way.

The bitter drops and sweet are meted out,

Mingled for every soul. But here is it

Wherein all joy alike—the consciousness

That He hath chosen us, and that he brings

Each by the shortest path, through joy and woe—

Yea, and through sin—to his eternal Rest.

THE HOSPITAL.

WHERE yonder lofty buttonwoods lift up
Their leafless branches to a dizzy height
Standeth apart the ancient Hospital.
An hundred fleeting years have gone since there
Was laid its first stone in a wilderness.
It is a place methinks where Death doth dwell,
With his full quiver of keen, torturing darts ;
Yet Mercy ministers to those he wounds.
She healeth him whose strength returns again,
And watches, soothing, by his bed who dies.

There, in a certain ward where many lie,
Is one who hath trod life's lengthened journey o'er
Into the winter that lies round the tomb.
In all this wide and many-peopled world,
She is alone ; not one from whom to claim
Those sympathies that run in kindred blood

Doth to her knowledge breathe. Shut in her heart
Are the sweet pictures of her early youth
When in another land, 'mid its green fields,
She played beneath its open sky, a child!
Who shall she speak to of these things? for 'tis
But nature thus amid the snows of age
To look back on the op'ning buds of Spring,
And so it seems the dusty space between
Is often clear and most transparent then.
But in these things—in all that memory
And meditation summon from the past,
Or that the thoughtful mind through every hour
Doth hold in its own world—she is alone!
Alone in the heart's solitude, aged
And poor, and laid in suff'rings; yet beneath
These gathered elements of misery,
That show without, and do appal the eye,
There is in her another hidden life,
Unharm'd by them, that the eye cannot see.
The soul hath separate life. In early youth,
So close it clingeth to the vigorous flesh,
They seem as one; but when that flesh, grown old,
Begins to shake and totter o'er the grave,
It looseneth its hold, and doth look out
Toward that eternal world to which it tends.

If it bath then treasure laid up in heaven,
How doth it plume its eager wings for flight !
So is it with this aged one. She came
O'er a long road, through poverty and toil,
To this poor dying bed ; but from it now,
As she looks back upon the desert past,
And forward to green fields in sight, life seems
As when these skies are filled with wintry storms—
Yet through a gold-rimmed opening in its clouds,
Light cometh down ; and looking up we see
The calm blue Heavens o'erspreading all above,
Where storms, nor clouds, nor tempests ever reach.

THOUGHT ASTRAY.

THOU lovest me! Tell me, now, what is Love?
Four letters and one impulse of the voice!
Thus much it is in sound—oft 'tis no more;
But what, in truth, is Love?

Far to the North,
Ev'n from the centre of its frozen plain,
I start upon my search. Each lone recess
And icy cavern or wide snowy waste,
I tread with downcast eye, till to the edge
Of Winter come, I overstep his reign
And pass into the intermediate space,
Fruitful—a mighty field of waving grain—
That lies between it and the burning zone.
Then following on, cross the imagined line
That like a belt binds endless Summer in.
Still seeking, on I pass till the great world
Is compassed by my footsteps, and I stand

Upon the icy pedestal first left.
And yet in all the search I have not found
One visible thing that shapes this feeling forth.
The world is void of it! where shall I look
For love's sweet likeness, or its palpable form?

Thou'st trod the world in the vain search!—now stand
Still where thou art, and turn thine eyes within.
Is it dark to thee?—burns no candle there?
Eyes that do reach without the stars of heaven,
Within, pierce not a single finger's length!
But there are some who too much look within.
For as to look without alone, doth dim
And blur the mirror of thy consciousness,
To gaze in it forever and to grow
Enamored with the study, doth neglect
A most demanding part of thee—thy flesh;
Letting its ties unto the outer world
Decay for want of use and separate.
And when these ties are once so broken off,
Believe me, such a shrinking fills the soul
From seeking to unite their bonds again,
That mostly the dividing space doth grow,
Wider and deeper, till the sensitive gulf
Thou passest not and none do pass to thee.

A winter lies about thee—round thy heart—
Between it and all others it is cold!
A snowy space—a barrier of ice
Invisible, but felt, doth hem thee in.
Thou comest forth, dost jostle by the way
Thy fellows—treadest the same earth with them—
Breathest the air they breathe—dost feel their sun—
Speakest with many; yet in brotherhood
Of purpose and uniting sympathy,
Thou walkest separate in another world!
And thou art conscious of it; they know not
What 'tis that chills them, while insensibly
They wrap the formal mantle, when ye meet;
But thou dost know, the cause lies at thy door.
Thou watchest every motion, every look—
A smile hath power thy need demandeth not—
A frown doth wound where swords should blunt their
edge.
Thou hast grown sensitive to looks and breaths,
Motions and glances; all these magnified,
And changed from their own unessential life,
Are armed against thee—fancied enemies.
All quick, the zephyr's breath doth wound at last,
Till life to thee hath grown a weariness!
Then by the narrowings of thy fate impelled

Thou dost retreat back from the dreaded world
One more remove. Less frequent now thy foot
Treadeth the open highway; it doth seek
Some solitary walk; the approaching form
Doth startle thee. The child's gaze fetters hath,
The ball and chain of the poor criminal.
The thoughtless salutation from the lips
Of some chance passer reacheth to thy heart,
Quickeneth its motion—maketh pale thy cheek;
And thou all out of tune, the faith which held
Thy manly power up while it scaled the wall
Now broken—lost, would fain forever hide,
At least if no more, rescued from thy shame.
What an eclipse to the bright lamp that burns
Of Intellect within! not that for thee
It might shed light alone, but that its rays
Uplifted should shine through a darkened world!

Yet better far to dim thus and go out
Unnoted, useless, if beneath neglect,
Discouragement, and loss, thou hidden hast
The pearl of promise of a better life,
Than lacking it, to attach unto thyself
Each coveted and honored quality
That decks a man out for this world's esteem.

For after all, as finished with itself,
What is this life? Take from me e'en the guess
Of an hereafter—let me contemplate
The thing alone. I track it from the first,
And note its windings careful to the end:
Mark its ascending steps, the level plain
Upon its summit, and its downward way.
Then, when I come to the extremest verge,
I gather up, upon the silent shore,
Some name illustrious, place it on the scale,
And in the opp'site balance one unknown.
Lo! they do weigh alike, nor this nor that
Can bring the other down—a grain of dust
Will give the victory to either one!
But, though this were the sum and measurement
Of life—if it did finish with this world;
And though this be the most true measurement
Of those distinctions which do perish here,
Yet, when we leave this fancied briefness out,
And join these moments to what lies beyond,
Another estimate must fill our thoughts.
We then are taught that though Ambition's goad
Doth urge us but to folly, a command
Of true authority, and the world's need—
Its destitution in the highest good—

Doth move us to fling every fetter off
And gird us, as no laggards in the race!

But I have wandered far from that first thought
Which led us to communion. What is love?
There is no definition. Love doth fill,
The scriptures tell us, all the breasts in heaven—
And more, that God himself is Love. But what
Is this high quality? And who can tell
How by despotic government it rules,
Gentle and just, but with resistless sway,
When it hath made its throne within the breast?
We may speak of its influence benign,
Its power and its effects, but to draw forth
The monarch's form and visible lineaments,
The sceptre and the dazzling royal robe,
Is not for mortal pencil.

LABOR.

THE artist seeks, when his last piece is done,
For a new subject. Many in review
Are led by Fancy—he doth choose but one.
To it he yields his thought, and for the time
Seeks that it may enamor him, by love,
To summon forth to effort all his powers.
How can he woo the thing he doth not love?
Or what he thus hath sought with entreaty
Till, oft repulsed, desire has turned aside,
How can he follow longer?

The miner feels no hardship in his toil
When all the ground is rich ; it yields reward
At each upturning ! Then each thing puts on
A look attractive ; the surrounding scene,
The lonely vale, the stream that waters it,
Bearing down from the mountain scales of gold,

Seem, separate from the wealth they hold for him,
To have a luring beauty of their own.
But let him pass the richly yielding spot,
And labor by its side with no return,
Forth from him slowly spreads an influence
Which mars to sight what is in truth unchanged.

So is it with our verse. We, as it were,
Walk on the margin of some lonely lake,
Looking beneath its waters. When, all clear,
We see the pebbly bottom, and discern
Strewed there the pearls we seek for, where we may
Stretch forth our hand and gather them, or where,
At greater depths, they lie yet in our sight,
So, by descending, we may bring them up,
Then all the air invigorates—we haste
Joyous upon our way! But while we walk,
If these same waters dim and muddied grow,
And we must search at random here and there,
Groping for what we see not, weary soon
Both of the place and labor we become.
One moment we do love our page; it brings,
Drawing them swiftly forth in definite form,
Thoughts that had shapeless flitted through our mind,
Or sometimes those we never knew before,

Robed in fair words, drop finished from our pen !
We look upon them with their first delight,
And lay them by, gladly enticing more.
'Tis but a moment, but one backward step
From this to deep disgust ! the current ceased,
Or all it offers inappropriate,
There come confusion and bewilderment,
That rob us even of the power of choice !

Toil hath been ordered as the lot of man,
And so is its infliction carried out
That not one, poor or rich in mental gifts,
But if he will excel where lies his task,
Must so excel by labor. Thou mayst bear
Great talents, and some great work yet undone
May be reserved for thee ; yet if thou dost
Reach thy high place and honored destiny,
Not in the smooth dress of the man of ease,
But in the laborer's garments thou shalt come.

Look through the world ! of all that is possessed
By men, that thou wouldst covet to possess,
Of skill or high attainment, what is found
That hath been reached by any other road ?
Though thou inherit the high seat that rests

Upon the summit of a kingdom's throne,
Still, if thou wouldst bring honor to thy name,
And well dispense the powers that cluster there,
For wisdom thou must labor, searching far
Through her great garner, where alike she calls
Peasant and prince to gather for himself.

The poet, whatsoe'er his gifts may be,
Still finds the brightest veins lie hidden deep.
Is he who tracks the silver through the rock,
Or sifts the grains of gold, less diligent
Than he who doth more plenteous metal seek ?
Our place we choose not. One doth cast our lot
Where He hath formed us for, yet all alike
To labor—His day laborers are we.

THE INK STAND.

How many here have nameless sat them down
To rise renowned! How many have been stripped
Here of bright hopes! Spreading from this small
source,

This little fountain, rivers have gone forth
T' enrich the earth—fair streams whose swelling tides
Bore freights of wisdom to remotest lands.
Here too, have gushed up bitter poisonous springs,
Which but to taste was death. Methinks I see
Another strife around the deep Well's mouth,
As when Lot's herdsmen strove with Abram's! Here
Th' invisible powers of evil that do tempt
Us to the race for fame, encamp 'gainst those
Who woo us to God's service.

'Tis a thing
Of weightiest account to write for those
Who shall come after us. The spoken word
Moves but a ripple in the air and dies;

But that writ down—transmitted as a gift
From thee to countless spirits yet unborn,
Shall go on planting, planting the same seed—
Its harvest lasts through Time! Though unto thee
In thine unhappy dwelling after death,
Souls shall be sent, having chos'n by thy word
Till thou wouldst stop the stream—'twill be too late!
Engraved once on the world's recording book,
The lesson thou hast left there, must endure,
Be 't good or evil. And though thou shouldst come
By after penitence to the safe fold
Where not thy first defects, nor foemen's shafts
Shall ever wound thee—yet, if by those lines
Written before, not now to be effaced,
Others do lose the path that thou hast found,
How marred thy blest conclusion! But if drawn
Heavenward by thy wooings, they are led
Through coming ages to thy new abode,
Then seems thine own salvation but a part—
But one gem of thy gath'ring—as one gift
'Midst offerings large to the skies' treasury.

Beware, then, oh, my Heart! And thou, dumb thing,
My slender golden pen, now glittering bright
Beneath the morning's beam—if I might speak

To thee, being heard, how would I caution give
Not to betray thy trust! It may be so
That thy words traced in this retreat alone
Shall live! that what no ear now listens to,
Or eye will stop to note, shall gain a place
Enduring on Time's tablet: let them be
Each one approved, as if 'twere surely so.
Then be their station lowly, near the path,
Where he who runs may read—or lifted up
To greater height for smaller sympathy,
It will be well. Not for thy power to climb
My feeble thought, art thou made ans'erable,
But that thou reach th' attainable ascent
Following the true pursuit. And better far—
Witness my soul and every faculty
That my tongue speaks your wish—to never rise,
Or leave a reputation that surmounts
The level of the green grass o'er my grave,
Than to do so by evil.

PREMEDITATION.

PREMEDITATION stares the rising thought
Or image out of countenance. I wait
Before I write it down, to see it fair
In all its full proportion, turn it o'er
And o'er—and it is loathsome to my sight!
Or else the thread I gather not at first
But follow back too far into the skein
Grows tangled, and the whole is cast aside.
Nor is it all that these themselves are lost—
Baffled endeavor is defeat, which blunts
And wastes the ardor of the next attack.

We need, as in our spiritual life,
So in our mental labors, well to know
And study out ourselves. Mind marks the man.
The beast that daily bears for us his load
We learn to humor as we note his strength,

Whether by quickened or by gentler gait,
With loosed or tightened rein, he best shall find
And soonest reach the journey's distant end.
The ship that bears us has its favorite tack,
Nor is there one upon the boundless sea
But he who standeth at the helm can tell
Whence come the winds that drive her swiftest on.
So we ourselves may not at first discern
Our surest path of progress, and long years
May be consumed in seeming wasted toil,
But having found it, and at last put off
The weights that had before held back our steps,
We learn, but not till then, our sum of strength.

MY DESK.

THIS piercé box upon my Writing Desk
Is filled with grains of sand. They to the sea
Were once a barrier. For years gone by,
For centuries and trains of ages passed
They did receive the billows as they rolled
And thinly spread far up along the beach.
The fisher's foot hath pressed them, or the form
Uncovered, delicate, cast from the wreck,—
The hand of beauty in her lonely walk
Upon the summer's evening, there hath writ,
With outstretched finger the desired name.
It hath beheld—this little heap of sand—
The midnight tempest charging o'er the Deep,
Or glistened as it gently rolled away
With morn or evening sun. Now it hath come
Thus prisoned to me for a baser use.

Here is my pen, too—a small scale of gold

First hid in the dark bosom of the earth
Is given shape in it. I cannot tell
From whence 'twas brought, or by whom it was found.
Some arm hath toiled for it—some eager hand
Has gladly stretched to clutch it: then it passed
Into how many forms before it reached
This one in me! And yet how many more
Will it yet wear when it is lost to me!
Gold keeps good company, its servants say—
It lodgeth with the rich, lineth their purse,
Or sits enthroned above some lovely brow,
Clasping a jewel there—but with the poor
It stays not!

My porcelain Inkstand! where were dug those earths
Which amid flames were to each other joined,
Made one fair mass in it? What foreign hand
Did with such art create these mingled flowers?
Who studied out its shape to please the eye,
And gave the whole thing beauty? Can I fix
A date, or habitation, or a name
For one of these? I cannot: all I know
Is what my eye now tells me as I turn
And see it here. This is the smallest part
Of the withheld recital!

Next I see

This small mock weapon close by my right hand,
Its blade of fine grained, polished ivory,
Its handle silver-studded bears a hoof
Yet perfect in its form—the hairy hide
Still as in life about it. Could I tell
Of the far wastes where roamed the elephant,
Or paint the yet green fields where leaped the deer
That gave their lives to furnish me this toy,
I might, perchance, not heedless lay it down
As I do now each hour. The very thing
Which seems most worthless, and which we least prize,
If it had utterance to tell us all
That hath passed near it, would the dullest ear
Detain in wrapt attention day by day,
Until its tale were told. This polished oak
Of which my desk is framed, had it such voice,
Thus might it speak: A century ago,
The tree from out whose bark-embraced side
I came, was but a small and tender shoot;
The spot whereon it grew, was near the top
Of a high wooded hill. From year to year
Left to the nurturing of the winter's storm
Or summer's gentler care—I upward sprang
From the green level of the grassy earth,
Until I pierced the forest's roof above.

Ye men behold our lofty branches spread
One o'er another, deep'ning for your shade,
But ye see not the even boundless plain
That like a rippling sea, far from its coast,
Lies at the forest's top! Above it soar
The eagle—all the plumed inhabitants
Of th' untrod woods. The armed and mounted blast
There sporteth at his will—the driven clouds,
Or those that sleep like the leviathan
Unmoved in the still deep, look down on us,
Or stooping kiss our topmost trembling leaves.
Beneath, upon my trunk, grew tufts of moss—
Unnumbered creatures clung to me, and found,
Somewhere upon my surface, spread abroad,
A home. The lizard, mottled like my bark,
Lay close and still as neared the Indian's tread—
He his own blind to vision. Up my side
Coursed the untired ant; and when the months
of Summer and sad Autumn were all gone,
And I had seen that ocean of green leaves
Put countless colors on, and fade and fall—
"Then fell the snow through all the winter's day,
And at the eve still fell! then the great owl
Stood up in his high place, and shook his wings,
Scattering a downy shower from all the branch.

He hooted through the woods till the wild night
Seemed wailing in his voice ! At spring, again,
Close to my root, the early flowers came forth
Untended by man's hand ; while the vast bulk,
Compassed by all my arms and boughs outspread,
Was decked with new-come buds. I heard the song—
The first cry of the birds returned to me,
And knew from where, 'mid endless Spring, they came.
Thus taught I have been of the secret ways
Of nature ; and could speak more of the lives,
And hid conversings of her multitudes
Than men in most learned books !"

THE NATURAL INTELLECT.

THOU ever first in Song! who climbed so well
Fame's loftiest height, and still unreached dost stand
In lonely grandeur on that cloudy Peak,
Idolized as thou art from age to age,
I had rather be in the green vale below
An unknown little child in Christ than thee!
True Wisdom is a second birth, and separate
From that by which the intellect arrayed
In sullied splendor waketh into being.
He who is richest in mere gifts of mind,
Hath no more skill to guide his soul aright
Than has the poorest. Both are destitute
Of that renewing beam, which fall'n from heaven
Upon the heart illumines it with light,
And without which all must benighted go,
Finding not, though they seek, the Way of Life.
Here is the Condemnation, that this Light
Is offered us, but we love darkness more.

POSTHUMOUS FAME.

To die, is but the fate decreed for all,
And dying thus to lose in all we have
That property which gave it worth to us.
What I do here possess I may give up
For others' use—I must give up at death;
And what I have which Death robs me not of—
As a renowned name—though still I keep,
Is worthless to me who have from it gone.
For though it lives and still remaineth mine,
'Tis in a stronger sense not thus, while I
Am dead, though it lives and can know it not.
Because, where'er my dwelling after death,
To this world and the things within it bound
I am as if in all I ceased to be.
Therefore I find the thought within my soul
Taking the less note of this present life,
And looking unto that which lies beyond.

HERE AND HEREAFTER.

WE here do differ: some have store of wealth,
Some do inherit power, some rich gifts,
That, in circuits vast and flight of thought,
Exalt them o'er their fellows. But all go
Poor, stripped, alike, into the other world!
Possessions, talents, power, no value have
In the celestial estimate. One price
And costly Gem alone, is current there.
He who in intellect ne'er reached our height,
Who in his lot was lodged with our contempt,
Who did group in his body all defects,
If but possessed of this, shall show more fair
And have more honor, than he lacking it
Who reigned here, adding lustre to his throne!

THE SNOW-STORM.

THE feathery flakes are dancing in the air;
How subtle must that influence be which draws,
Each one down from its flight! So slight they seem,
The viewless winds might be their dwelling-place
Where they should still abide. Within my glance
Millions now slow descend; they whirl—turn back,
Climb toward the skies again—far from their course
Are driven ere they reluctant touch the earth,
Yet o'er this field the spotless covering
Rests, smoothly spread, as though some master hand
Had, after, levelled it, or counted out
The layers in each pile. From yonder cloud
O'erhanging us, the silent messengers fall
Which thus doth waste itself and back return
Its substance to the earth, from whence it came,
From the deep sea—the broad and mighty river,
Or rivulets and dews, it woo'd you up,

Ye countless drops, now fettered in my sight,
Each in its crystal prison. Oh, how fair
This wintry scene! Not that it should endure,
Else would it tire the eye and bolt the doors
Of earth's most bounteous store-house: but thus shown
'Midst nature's ever-shifting imagery,
How beautiful! Nor beautiful alone,
But 'neath these white folds, closely covered lies
The autumn's wheat, unreached by nipping winds,
So that th' untainted sheet a robe becomes—
A fitting garment—that doth nurture life.
Flung o'er the hills and 'midst the wild ravines,
It melts and gently trickles, drop by drop,
Into the secret cisterns of the springs,
Which hoard the precious store for summer's need.
He who doth shiver with the cold, and fault
The snow's thick fall to-day, shall bathe his brow
Yet in some fountain, 'neath a sultry noon,
And though he knew it not, be blessed in it!

But what is there in this our fallen world,
Which bringeth benefits, and in itself
Is harmless—that hath from its first intent
Not been diverted by our sins? The breath
That cools the sick man's cheek, hastes on its way

Till it becomes the tempest, dealing death ;
The dew-drop that scarce bends the pendant flower,
Once helped to drown the mountain-tops. So ye
Soft, feathery snow-flakes, gathered high above
Some sleeping hamlet, when the breath of Spring
Hath loosed your frozen grasp, come thundering down
The fearful avalanche ! Or fruitful vales,
Between high lifted peaks, ye do fill up,
Denying the soft earth to hungering mouths
And willing hands. But further toward the poles
Ye sea and land wrap in enduring bonds,
Capping the globe with ice. What clothes this field
In white—this landscape in an innocent robe
That guards the embryo root and melting pours
Refreshing drops o'er all beneath—there spreads
A stony, frigid wilderness afar,
Nursing fierce storms—sending them o'er the earth
On errands of destruction.

'Midst thy works

I dwell, O Lord ! their kindly influences
Receiving, and their countless visible charms
Looking upon with joy : yet well I know
There is not one but, clothed with power by thee,
May in a moment wound me. Still I live,
Not fearful, but assured that thy command

O'erruleth all: rejoicing in the word
That every creature worketh for his good
Who loveth thee, I wait from day to day
Their various messages, nor would I dread
That, which at last, by some such hand shall come,
Calling me to thy presence.

THE SECRET SIN.

CAN I in secret cherish now this Sin,
And hope to reap not, some time, punishment?
What though I it confess not to myself,
And utter forth anew each morn a prayer
Against the tempter, when as eve comes on
I welcome him again with smiling look?
Is there uncertainty or blinding doubt
Between me and my fault? Can I not tell
Whether 'tis mine or laid on me unkown?
Ah yes, the turning of my ear away
From the loud condemnation of my heart
Drowns not that inward sense which needs no tongue
To tell me I am guilty! And if guilt
I thus permit to spread with clinging root,
I know with blood it must be plucked at length.
The terms whereon we hold our inward peace
Have not been changed, nor is the sleepless eye

That marks each taker of the covenant,
Dimmed that it cannot see. Th' avenging arm
Still doth exist and hoard its dreaded strength
When nothing hurts, and we, secure, sin on,
As in the moment when descends its blow!
What then is needed? That these wav'rings cease
Between indulgence and infirm regret:
That I let conscience cry into my ear,
How but to taste of what we dare not drink,
Partakes in the true nature of the deed
Of the full crime, and shares its penalty.
For look, my soul, how thou art hemmed within
Cherished possessions! These are all a mark
For the correcting shaft, or may become
Keen instruments of torture. Are there not
Some bound to thee by such close union
They seem to be not of a separate life,
But part of self, and self's most tender part?
Lo, but to touch them or to breathe upon,
How dost thou tremble! Pleasures that have led
Thee upon doubtful paths for many years,
Holding thee chained by their returning spell,
Do in a moment lose their prolonged power,
Their fascination turned to loathed defects,

Thou hatest them—because linked with the thought
Of retribution now poured on the head
Of one whose wounds bleed chiefly in thyself!
Yet may such pay the forfeit if the love
Thou hast for Him who bids thee put away
All known sin for his sake, can move thee not.

IMMORAL WRITING.

I KNOW it doth become so weak a pen—
Or rather one that utt'rance gives a heart
So stored to its full share of guilt as mine—
To gently deal with others, and condemn
Temp'ring their judgment by mine own desert.
Yet in this thing, if all the gathered world
My audience were—pledged to uphold my word—
I would call on them, that when traitor turned,
I use the arms God gave me for their aid
To wound my fellow soldiers whom he loves,
They count me fallen! Turn me from the ranks!
Forget my words and deeds! Though I should change,
Seek to wound virtue and myself be slain,
Virtue is Virtue still!

THE PRESENT.

THE Present, with its portion, though that be
Increased an hundred fold from days gone by,
Seems ill provided, and we still go poor !
What once was coveted, now being won,
Is valued not—'tis needful to be prized
That it should still lie just beyond our reach.
Poor cause for Him to bless who giveth all
And marks th' effect, what offered gratitude
Or increase of content ! Let it not be
Thus with my heart. As one cast from the wreck
While he stands dripping on the rocky coast,
And sees his fellow's lifeless form washed in,
Doth feel anew thanksgivings for his life,
So let me feel, and gaze still at the want
That I am saved from—at the penury,
Disease, and woe, on millions round me laid,
Rather than midst so great deliverance,
Repine for one gift more !

THE EYE OF FLESH.

BE still, dull tongue,
And, all ye senses, be closed up, but sight,
This is the presence of the beautiful!
Gaze, gaze, ye voiceless orbs, whose glance without
Shining within upon th' imprisoned soul,
Feeds its mysterious, sleepless power of thought.
Oh, outward eye, thou art chief minister
To the pent spirit! Thou bring'st to its cell
Far worlds that glimmer on the edge of space,
Or, for its view dost deck its dungeon walls
With fair scenes of this earth—fields, forests, flowers.
Thus dost thou wait on, and inform the soul
That is so blind-folded and fettered now;
Yet, in that day when it shall be unveiled,
Needed no more—all thy strange beauty gone—
Thy light shall dim—thou'lt shrink and fall to dust,
As but a clod of base and common clay!

OUR LIFE.

UNTO the watchful mind which doth compare,
And weigh its inward pleasures day by day
With those more perfect shaped by its desire,
How doth this life, when in the balance laid,
Seem wanting! There are elements enough
Of pure sensation in the new-born heart,
But there remain too, roots of bitterness.
These contraries the heart itself contains,
And, at the best, would muddied streams bring forth,
But when beside its lack, we count the world
Wherein 'tis placed—the hourly influences
It lends to ruffle and disturb, we find
How like a thing placed far beyond our grasp,
Reached but by sight, is perfect happiness!
The torrent, bursting from the mountain's side,
Foaming 'midst rocks until it reach the base,
If poured at first o'er some smooth marbled way

Would flow with scarce a ripple. But its course
Thus rugged and uneven, was marked out
By Him who called it from its secret spring.
Take from us the deep consciousness we feel
Of a capacity for purer joys,
And we will want them not, insensible!
But leave this consciousness, and from our lot
Remove the opposing trials of this life,
How can we crave to ever see fulfilled
Its now continual prophecy of heaven!

THE WORK OF ART.

THE Gem that doth surprise the gazer's eye
Was found by long, tired search. Its pent up rays
Of darting light were loosed by patient toil.
And so the work that bringeth sudden joy
Costless, unsought—was weariness to him
Who wrought its each proportion, long before
As a new thing 'twas greeted by the world.
But having fashioned it, and turned away
From its stale contemplation, he at length
Looks back, and with fond eye, what others praise
Sees doubly fair—thus reaping a reward !

THE ANGLER.

SEE how this Angler patient watches o'er
The line he holds! Its armed, enticing bait
Is hidden from his sight. So is the place—
The wat'ry chambers and the wand'ring prey
Whereto it hangs beneath. He can but note
The painted float above, and draw it forth
Not sure of a reward. So do I watch
Above the peopled current of the mind,
And with my pen whate'er it offers take
And lay it by, not hasty to reject
Even seemless useless gifts, lest I may lose
With them those of more worth. But when my store
My little basket for the time is full,
I cease to toil, and after interval
Of changed pursuit, back to its hoard return;
What suits my lacking not, then cast away,
What serves my need apply unto its use.

THE RELEASE.

I THOUGHT, as by my friend's sick couch I stood,
How like the way is made we all must tread,
Feeble and suffering, downward to the tomb!
If we could take this from our portion off,
Disease and the accompaniments of death,
And go up lifted as Elijah was,
Unto that Rest now reached alone through them,
How many who do shrink from year to year,
And tremble o'er the last delivering step
Would crowd life's farther threshold! It is well
Some slight, imagined bar should hold us back,
Or clamors for deliverance would arise
Till they should trouble Heaven.

P R A I S E.

As everything in Nature, from the star
That sparkles in the zenith, to the worm
That on the earth I tread between my feet,
Telleth of a Creator—and as more
We do unfold its parts, it telleth more
Of that Creator's wisdom, goodness, power;
So I could wish that every thought drawn forth,
And image from the store-house of my mind,
Might speak thanksgiving! and as from the depths,
Deeper within that treasury it was born,
So it might higher rise in rendering praise.
Praise is the one great utterance! the song
Of all things round me! Nature in her haunts,
And man as I behold him, for the sum
Of all his acts and checkered history
Is the fulfilling of a supreme will.
Not that God moves to sin, but man intent

Upon his purpose, wealth or pleasure here,
Chooseth his way, but God appoints the end!
God's enemies do praise him, for their zeal
In guilt he turneth to his own account,
Making them strive unconsciously for good.
The wicked have been scourges in his hand
To scourge their fellows; or their stripes laid on
Have humbled saints whom pride held back from
heaven.

The righteous praise Him, even when they fall,
And miss the path, in that true penitence
Which weeping doth retrace each erring step.

OUR CHANGING FRAMES.

I HAD a glimpse of Heaven. Not by the eye
Of flesh, nor yet that rayless, inward sight,
Which looketh through no organ, but discerns
By spiritual knowledge forms that are—
It was a state of feeling; a still calm
Whereby each trait'rous passion, all subdued,
Laid as if chained forever! while my love
For those whom I should love, not marred by doubt
Of their affection, or by unkind thought,
Watered my heart as some pure gushing stream.
Then too, Sin, in those forms which she puts on,
Mostly tempt me (which none know but me),
Seemed, though I warred not with her, all withdrawn.
I noted the great change—how silently
It came, unwrought by effort of mine own;
And said, This is a gift—a glimpse of heaven!
Why cannot I abide thus? oh, my soul,

Is this thy rest? Can glimpses satisfy—
Glimpses far off, though never more obscured?
They might, and hold thee back from near approach.
'Tis not reward then, but encouragement
To press toward that reward! Not the great feast,
But a faint foretaste of it, to thee sent
To cheer thee, drooping—for the Christian state
Here, is not one of quietude, but war—
War that shall truce nor brief cessation know
For him who must die fighting—whose release
Shall not be brought by friendly hands at length,
But sent upon the point of some keen shaft,
That erreth not, aimed by the enemy.

THE SCULPTOR.

SEE'ST thou, high up on yon unfinished wall,
A small rough habitation? There it hangs,
Near to the summit. But one hostile stroke,
Well dealt, would spread its ruins far beneath.
That is the place, where hidden out of sight,
The Sculptor slowly shapes the rough-hewn block,
That at some future day, his labors o'er,
He may take off th' unsightly covering
And show triumphant, his fair statue done!
So toil I, shut apart and separate,
While the great throng unnoted pass me by,
Hoping that by His aid, for whom my task,
I may form, with the instruments of thought,
Some shape that shall anew embody Truth
Clothed in fair dress, or words of flowery garb
That may the passer's gaze draw to herself.

MUSIC.

I PASSED at night along the lonely street,
The habitations round me close shut up,
Leaving without a solitude. Not such
As gladdens us 'midst woods and sunny fields,
But oftener casts a shadow. It was thus,
As at a thoughtful pace I wandered by
Some mansion—from a window o'er my head
Came down sweet sounds. I paused, and 'midst the
shade,
Where no eye reached me, listened to them come.
It was a woman's voice that rose above
Faint swellings from an organ following it.
Some hymn she sang, though not the utterance
Of words could I discern—I saw not face
Nor form, nor could I give to them a name.
'Twas but those notes—that lovely harmony
Which thus, amid the stillness of the night,

Had, as it were, being. Now it rose,
Then sank again: crept softly to some height,
Then with full gushings hovered o'er the ground—
As with bright wings in circles here and there
It fluttered round my heart—darted afar,
Came near, and far or near enrapt me still!
Oh, what a sport it is, I said, for thee
To move me thus—to ope the guarded door
That shutteth in its prison-house, my soul!
Who gave thee, Music, right of entrance there—
The golden key—yea, taught thee how to touch
Each secret spring within, where covered up
From man's sight, lie susceptibilities
Whose buried germs are hid from my own eye?
How weak I am! How round me do exist
Influences that have power to o'ercome
My spirit's fortified part! Then to my thought
Words mingled with the strain I listened to,
And thus they spoke. I was left on the earth
When Innocence departed! The thin air
My dwelling is, and by its viewless tides,
Its ripples, and soft flowings, I am born.
In every place, encircling the great world,
Is found my presence. I inspire the birds
In solitary forests—rivulets

Are taught by me their murmurs: while fierce storms
And thunderings, to the ear attuned so deep,
Strike symphonies sublime! Man hath found out
The secret of my utterance, and hath bound
My voices to his service. Oft by them
He doth his evil deeds, but at the first
It was not so—my birth-place was on high.
Nor have I part now in my powers thus used,
From me but robbery! I still exist
Pure—unpolluted, for the pure in heart.
When then, with measured tread, I enter in
The chambers of thy soul, 'tis but to strike
My harp there to thanksgiving—to send up
An off'ring from those depths reached but by me:
While thou, too, as the sounds reverberate
Like Heaven's echoes, shouldst be taught to look
For that approaching time when, brought safe there,
I shall hymn to thee in thy place of Rest!

THE DREAM.

THE Poet sat alone within a wood;
Great trees threw round about him thickest shade;
The sod was fresh and green whereon he lay,
While at his feet a rivulet flowed by,
Filling the place with murmurs. Not a sound
Other than of its gentle voice was heard.
It was deep solitude, yet not the dark
And dreary hermitage, where fancy flies
Often when we name solitude, for here
Nature put on her gayest dress, and wore
Continual smiles, that roused not sombre thought,
But sympathy of gladness and delight.
'Twas here the poet sat and gazed around,
Gath'ring within his glance no other things
Than every eye would note in visible forms,
Yet in th' effect and influence on his heart
Experiencing more.

For many years, he said, thus have I looked
On Nature, and have ever felt there was
For me a charm among her outspread works,
Which many knew not. To no human ear
I told it, for the doubt of a response
Imposeth silence. Nor with her alone,
Thus 'midst her visible shapes I loved to stray,
But there has been a present consciousness
With this my love for her, of looking still
Inward upon the mind—noting its ways,
Rather than, with that impulse which is strong
In most, to take my part in the world's deeds.
In earlier youth with these came soaring thoughts
Of Fame, which easily can mount and reach
In one brief gladsome flight, what years of toil
And climbing steep may gain not. But not toil
Nor climbing steep, has gained this height for me.
In the mean while youth's false distorted dreams
Are vanished, and before the goal is reached,
I have been taught what most learn only there,
How false Ambition's promises—how poor,
But famine to the spirit, her reward.
Yet stand I where I did—here is my place
'Midst nature, and within the teeming mind,
But for those dreams of youth, and hopes of deeds

Which, if not evil, sought were for renown,
I have now resting on my heart the sense
Of an imposed task—for the advance,
Brilliant and smooth of the triumphal march,
The lowlier, rougher path of toil, beset
With dangers, travails, temptings by the way;
And as the one led up toward that renown,
This lowlier way seems, but for him to tread
Who would his Maker serve, loving his kind.

Thus mused the poet, and soliloquized,
Using great freedom 'midst the rocks and stones,
Which were his chosen companions. Then he ceased
And gazed about him with the same delight
That he had gathered from them, when at first
He did discern their beauty: for to him,
Though changeable its shades, emotion came,
A deep perpetual fount at Nature's call,
But it had rather been to him of late
Mingled and clouded, for the morn of life
Was gliding by, had come unto the noon,
And while these secret sources of delight
Still gushed and offered to his lips their drink,
They had done nothing more. Alone he stood,
In purpose and accomplishment—he seemed
Sep'rate in all received, and all conferred.

It happened now, after a time of thought,
That partly had been spoken forth in words,
And partly uttered not, th' uplifted arm
Whereon his head had rested, gently fell
Along the ground, and all his form stretched out
Beneath the shade, on bed of softest grass,
Sunk into sleep.

Upon a branch o'erhead
He dreamed a bird with crimson plumage clothed,
Alighted. Void of fear or dread it was,
While, as birds do, it stood and smoothed its coat,
Uttering its note at times. The poet saw,
So near it was, that mingled with the hue
O'erspreading most its form, were separate spots
Of other tints and colors, setting off
By contrast what would else have dimmed itself.
How wonderful, he said, that on a thing
So low down in th' extended scale of life
Should be displayed such beauty! Not a shape
Simple and by itself to please the eye,
But wondrous combination. In a space
My hand may cover, see what skill and art
Have grouped, as 'twere, and fixed like rays of light,
Hues that each paints the other—and how rich,
How affluent in its power to adorn

Must He be who thus scatters beauty forth,
Not to be seen but hidden! Now it seemed
In this strange dream, that when the poet ceased,
The little bird, scarce spreading out its wings,
Alighted yet more near him, and thus spoke:
I am sent to thee this bright summer's day
From off the nest where lay my unfledged young,
To pledge thee my obedience. 'Midst the woods
My dwelling is—upon the topmost boughs
I watch the early sun. From the mown field
I gather grains the harvestman hath left.
My downy nest, hidden by clumps of leaves,
The eye of man sees not. Yet as I sit,
From off its lofty perch, the forest wide
Lies 'neath my glance. Amid the feathered world,
My foes and friends, I live—the eagle soars
Above me, and the wakened owl hoots out
All night from the same branch. Of all these things,
Will I confess and tell into thine ear,
For I am as thy servant.—Then it seemed
That ere the slumberer well had taken in
This wonderful address, or quite could note
More than its import, at his feet a voice,
As from the surface of the murmuring brook
Arose: Upon the dry and parched ground

Men walk, and 'midst the forest's screening shade
Roam beasts that panting flee the summer's sun.
But in the crystal current do we dwell,
Darting 'mong depths and watery caves beneath,
O'er the cool pebbles, and 'midst hidden flowers.
Nor to the pent up space between these banks
Is bound our life, but as this narrow stream
Seeks the wide river, and it in its turn
Flows to the sea, so we by kindred ties,
And by far journeys that we sometimes make,
Dwell in and call our own appropriate sphere
The whole wide world of waters. Of their depths,
Of multitudes there swimming, can I speak,
And all this will I tell thee, being bound
Truly unto thy service.—As the voice
Here ceased, the poet saw a silvery flash
Beneath the stream, dart down till lost to sight.
Not long he mused, when, lifting up his eyes,
With slow majestic step, lo, on his dream
A Lion came. Still in his senseless sleep,
Keeping the fears of more skilled wakefulness,
He trembling sought to fly; but terror bound
Each limb, until his dreaded visitor
Drew near, and silent stood. His shaggy mane
Hung like the dismal locks of fabled Night.

His yellow eye gleamed not as with the ire
Of the dumb beast alone, but seemed to burn
The very fire of hatred, as if lurked
Some spirit of intenser life beneath :
Though I be crowned not in thy sight, he said,
I am a monarch ! All the pathless wastes
Of the far earth I hold beneath my sway.
The gloomy desert trembles at my voice.
I tread the Niger's reedy banks; last night
A hunter, slumbering by his watch-fire, lay—
I leaped upon him ! Where the antelope
Steals in at evening to the lonely spring
I couch unseen. Through the deep wilderness,
In caverns, forests deep and solitudes,
Where man hath not been, nor may ever be,
Are my familiar haunts. Yet of them all
Will I narrate into thy listening ear,
Nor harm thee—I thy suppliant am come.
The slumb'rer feared no more; and to the lone
And dreary wilderness, or wheresoe'er
It was from whence he came upon his dream,
The king betook himself.

Not wakened yet,
The poet wondered at the things he saw,
And deemed them real. The bird, the fish, the beast,

Each speaking with intelligent voice, he heard,
And in his thought summoned them back again.
While, as he meditated, from the height
Above, he saw descending 'midst the boughs
That interwoven were to o'ershield him,
A silvery Cloud. From the far azure depths
It seemed to fall until near by his feet
Suspended—not quite stooping to the ground,
Unmoved it hung. Within, as through a mist,
Now as he gazed, he saw a shadowy form:
Its dimmed imperfect shape awakened thoughts
Of beauty and of majesty. A voice
Came forth from it with utterance, speaking thus:
My place is in the air. At times I rest
When all the winds are still, far as thy sight
Can note my form ere lost in the deep blue.
At morn I do receive th' ascending rays,
Sent heralds of the sun. At silent eve
I wait upon him fleeing from the west,
And stand 'midst the rich audience round his throne,
Clothed with his glory. On the sultry day,
I float above the parched fields of grain,
Sprinkling them with soft showers, or I come
Robed in the mantle of the threat'ning storm
Frowning and dark with tempests. Then dart down

My fiery arrows, lighting into flame
The farmer's gathered store. Or on the top
Of some old forest patriarch they fall,
And rend him to the root. The ruddy cheek
Blanches to hear my voice, and trembling crowds
Breathe freer when upon the howling gale
I flee, and bare the azure vault again.
Last eve a venturous voyager of the air,
Upheld by silken globe, far from the earth
Ascended, and while neath the stars I slept
Passed through my vapory form; he little dreamt
Of hidden sparks about him lurking there,
That with a touch had severed each thin cord,
And cast him headlong through the abyss beneath!
Yet do I stoop thus from those fields of air
To know thy bidding.

Lingering yet a time

Amid th' unbroken stillness, then the Cloud,
As borne by spirits on their silent wings,
Rose out of sight. The poet turning now,
Beheld beside him, as it seemed a form
That shrunk back from his presence. As before,
He trembled at his unknown visitor,
This one recoiled from him. At once made bold
By witnessed fear, the dreamer raised his hand,

But where he sought to touch, there was no flesh
Or substance palpable. Though thus unclothed,
Thus spake the airy shape: I hold a life
Immortal. I am housed in the flesh
When in my proper dwelling, until death
Opens the gates of the eternal world.
I am the spirit that doth quicken man
With hopes and fears, with love and hatred—all
That moves to thought or deed. Close covered up
Within his breast I hide, ev'n from the eye
That looks with tenderest love. Of all I dread
And most abhor the light, yet thus unveiled,
With power to change no feeling, or to hide,
Thy prisoner I come.

As the voice ceased,
The form from whence it came, to the one sense
That apprehended it alone, was lost;
And all the scene where now the poet lay,
Returned to its first solitude, shone fair
Upon his shrouded vision, as if sleep
Still bound him not. Yet, though thus much he saw
Of real things, within his dreaming thought
Moved more. For presently another form,
Unlike that gone, drew near. 'Twas of such height
As man attains when most with grace endowed.

White, flowing garments hung in many folds
Down to his feet. The hair was of that hue
Which men call golden. From the downcast eyes
Fell influences whose unseen source was Love.
The features all in harmony were joined,
Uniting gentlest looks with majesty.
The hue upon the forehead and the cheek
Not marbled all, partnered with blooming tint,
Yet such as added more, not tainted, purity.
There was no ray or circling band of light—
It was as man made perfect: Thou this day,
It said, art brought, O poet, to thy place.
Those visioned shapes that on thy dream arose,
As by a figure, tell that nature's forms
And the soul's secret depths shall be revealed
In such large measure that thou mayst unfold
Unto thy fellow men, things hid before.
This unearned priv'lege hath been given thee,
Not to enrich ambition—thou art called
To teach thy fellows. Trials thee await,
Nor shalt thou draw from thy peculiar lot
More comfort than he doth who serves his Lord
Within the lowliest place: his truest peace
Descends from Him for whom he lab'reth—thine
Must come thence too. I would thee undeceive

Thus on the threshold, from those promises
Which make a difference, parting thee from him :
Ye do divide one service ; if thou art
Faithful like him, thou hast of his reward.
Go forth, then, to thy work. Stoop not to glean
Fame for thyself, or way-side sprung renown ;
While thou dost show its dangers and its steeps,
The Path of Life strew thou with Heaven-plucked
flowers !

Thou hast so long to toil—so many days
Ere thou shalt be called hence. Fill full thy time.
With true endeavor—what thou find'st to do,
Do with thy might.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HEART.

In the still night, as I lay on my bed,
Thoughts from the day still preventing sweet sleep,
Though she waited by my couch with her veil of
Forgetfulness,
Willing with gentle hand to cast it o'er my wearied
form,
One* came to my chamber holding a burning light;
He raised it aloft while he looked down upon me,
And motionless stood gazing as to view mine inmost
soul.
In that strange interview as between the voiceless dead,
Fear bound my trembling limbs, and troubled thoughts
my tongue.
I marvelled whom he was, at the dead of night thus
coming,

* The Spirit that convicts the heart.

Unknown and uninvited to my secret place of rest.
But soon I saw him clothed with majesty,
Such spotless garments and celestial grace,
The questionings of my heart were turned to awe.
Not of the earth, then said I, but from where,
The heavens veil from my sight—thou art come down
To me a worm. Command or lead the way ;
Thou rul'st the soul—adoring I obey.

It was along some unknown* way we passed,
Once beautiful I judged, but blighted now ;
There hung the withered vine, its clusters dead,
The olive cast her fruit upon the earth.
I saw there multitudes of faded flowers
Parched as it had been in their summer's dress,
The Lily of the Valley, and the Rose
That bloomed of old on Sharon. No sweet sound
Of singing birds came out from the dead boughs,
Or insects' voices from the parched ground.
I seemed to walk in autumn, but it was
An autumn more intense than that which strips
From nature's form her delicate summer robes
Ere winter cometh leading on his storms.

*. Our first serious thoughts.

Soon came we where an archway through a rock
Rose o'er our path, spanning two brazen gates;
The stone frowned down with look impregnable.
As we approached, beneath its gloomy shade
We saw one* watching. Covered o'er with mail
He sat as of the rock, immovable.
While hidden yet from sight, our footsteps fell
Echoing afar off on his list'ning ear;
He rose with lifted shield and glittering sword,
But as we came full on his view, he fled.
Then, drawing near, my guide knocked thrice upon
The rugged brass. His strokes resounded loud,
But from within no answer came; at which
I fearful said: How shall we enter here,
Seeing that there are none to welcome us?
He answered not, but turned with looks of love
That did illumine all my clouded heart,
Then led to where a little earth removed,
Laid bare beneath my feet a secret spring.†
'Twas slight, and to mine eyes regarding it,
Seemed powerless; but when by his command

* The sinner's fear of conversion.

† Prayer, as taught by the Holy Spirit.

I touched it, lo! the pond'rous doors gave way,
Admitting us unharmed!

Now following at his side on entering,
I saw he covered o'er the lamp he held,
So that its rays fell on my path no more.
And then at once such darkness shrouded me,
I was bereft of sight, and stood as lost,
Discerning naught, nor knowing where I stood.
But soon uncov'ring it in part again
There stretched each way a dim, unmeasured plain.
No wall or boundary was visible
On either side; but all around and above
Thick shadows deepened into utter night.
Far in the centre, like a taper's spot
Gleamed a faint light. Thither the Angel led,
And through the wide obscurity we passed
Like spirits through the silent realms of death.
As we came near the light more bright it grew,
And flickerings from it fell about our feet.
Then I beheld 'twas from a lofty fire
That burned upon an altar in the midst.
Beside it there was One* of fiend-like shape,
And hue dark as the night, save where the blaze

* The Evil Spirit who reigns in the natural heart.

Reflected, lit up all one side his form.
As we approached, not seeing us, he stood,
And with his wings slow waving, fanned the flames.
They rose in crimson wreaths, illuming
A deep, wide circle round and over him—
A lurid chasm in the black abyss.
Here paused we, and I heard his voice thus cry:
Burn, burn, forever burn! no other light
Than thine, dread quenchless fire, e'er enter here!
I love this gloom—all evil do I love,
All good I hate! Then said I to my guide:
Is this a mansion in that dreadful place,
Whither the souls condemned are sent, of those
Who die on earth unreconciled to God?
He answered: From the field first bear the sheaves,
Then seek to find the fruits within them hid.
Now, as we silent gazed, the fallen Fiend,
Touched by an inward dread instinctive, turned,
And as he turned beheld the Angel stand.
He trembled at the beauteous, lovely sight,
Then drawing back, as if with horror filled,
Fell prostrate, and with wings uplifted wide,
Did cover all his black and hideous length.
I looked upon him prostrate. At my side
The Angel stood in radiant majesty.

I thought, O Sin, how fathomless the depths
Whereto thou'rt fallen! Holiness, thy garb,
How beautiful, worn or in Hell or Heaven!

Toward the deeper darkness that all round
Set limit to my sight, the Angel turned.
His lamp shed but dim light, not going before
Nor following after us with piercing ray,
But casting o'er our pathway a pale beam,
Lighting each step. I followed wondering
Nor without dread upon the unknown track,
But with me was no strength to turn or stay;
Drawn helpless, I was taught there is a Power
That without visible bonds or seen restraint,
Reigns as its monarch, o'er the soul supreme.
Now came we to a broad and winding way,
That upward led by many steps ascending.
All ruinous it was, as though untrod,
Save by the viewless, wasting steps of years,
Yet by the vestiges of grandeur there,
I knew 'twas worthy once the tread of kings.
As we approached its summit, a wide plain
Stretched in a measureless circle on our view,
And o'er it ghost-like forms* from far and near

* Our natural evil passions and dispositions.

Fled through the dim light to the deeper gloom.
I walked upon this plain till in its midst
Ope'd a vast void—and through it looking down
I saw the altar—he who tended it
Was risen again, feeding its sleepless fires.
Thence following the Angel, turning back
Through darkness I was led until a wall
Like to the barriers of some fortified rock
Rose up before us, limiting our steps.
Against this wall my guide held up his lamp.
I saw where once it had been covered o'er
With fair Inscriptions;* but their import now
Was lost to every eye. Dimmed by the dust
Of ages and the erasures of decay,
I could interpret or discern no word
On all its sullied and mysterious page.
Then said I, May I know concerning this,
Which now thou showest me? He answered: These
were words of Wisdom, writ with flowing gold.
Thou'st heard how glorious in days of old
The Temple shone from Zion's sacred top,
Arrayed in Ophir's costly offerings—
This was more glorious!—the Temple's dress

* The Law of God as originally written on our hearts.

Was of the earth, put on by mortal hands;
Here as a garment heavenly Truth was spread—
Spread by the hand of God! The treasures there
Shone in dumb splendor—from this place they spoke
With an inspired tongue! But now their voice
Goeth forth no more—the glory is departed!

Now passing on we walking came to where
A Beautiful Garment* lay spread o'er our path.
'Twas as though he who once was clothed with it
Had by the hand of death been plucked away,
Leaving it as he died. I lingered here.
The angel said, See that thou touch it not,
But look upon it—mark it well. His lamp
Then shed forth brighter rays, and near my feet
I saw a snowy robe. Upon its neck
There hung a clasp made of one goodly pearl;
No other ornament through all its length
It bore, save its own pure and radiant hue.
Now, as I gazed, a change came over it;
Slowly it grew transparent to my sight;
Then I beheld this robe had been a covering,
For underneath, encompassed by its folds,

* Man's original Innocence.

A suit of armor* glittered in the light.
The breast-plate undimmed, shone like burnished gold;
The girdle lay as it had circled him
With strength, who wore it. By its side I saw
The helmet covered o'er with rainbow hues;
The shield was small and white, as when a cloud
Floateth a spot of silver in the sky.
Then while I looked on it, I longing said,
Oh! dress to be desired, would that my soul
Might here disrobe of clay and put it on!
The Angel answered: With an eye of flesh
Thou lookest. Beautiful in truth it seems,
And yet its heavenly temper hath all gone.
Lay now thine hand upon it—know its strength.
I stooped, and at my touch it fell to dust!
As some once cherished form that long hath lain
Hid in the grave, yet marred not by decay,
Keeping the freshness of an early death;
So that when one with filial love doth come,
To reïncase the treasured bones, he looks
Startled, astonished, on a father's face,
And ere he mark it well, the features, touched
By th' air, dissolve to shapeless earth again.—

* The protection that was in man's original Innocence.

So fell this Beautiful Garment from my sight!
The eye still sought for it, but found alone,
A heap of thinnest dust! Over my heart,
As a thick cloud, a heavy sadness came.

For a brief space, the Angel said, I lead
Yet farther on; follow thou in my steps.
Then o'er another wide and ruinous way
We passed, ascending to another plain
Like that just left. Here, as I walked, I saw
The forms of many harps.* Veiled by the shade,
Their outlines seemed most fair, as though the strings
Might utter harmony in every voice,
From the faint whisper, delicate—scarce heard—
Which as the tint of early dawn delights,
Unto those deeper tones that thrill the soul
Like richer splendors when departs the day.
I looking on them, said: Thou who dost know
The songs of angels—is there not one here
That thou mayst strike to cheer my drooping heart?
Then, as before, his lamp shed brighter rays.
The harps that in the gloom appeared so fair,
Were ruinous with decay: as the light shone,

* Praise, as offered by the unfallen heart.

From off their tops, with sable wings outspread,
Flew startled birds—unclean birds of the night,
That rested there unseen. The delicate chords
Were all enwrapt with damp and clinging mould;
Entwined about them serpents, now disturbed,
Threatened with lifted heads and eyes of fire.
When I found utterance I trembling cried:
What wreck is this through which thou ledest me,
Where darkness and corruption have come o'er
Such exquisite things, sitting in triumph thus
'Midst ruins, not like those of earth—the place
Of their inheritance—but throned supreme,
In some fair mansion once of heaven's domain?
He, speaking not, led on with rapid step
Till by a lofty chasm's brink we paused.
From here I saw as in the depths of Hell
Once more the flaming altar. From it came
A red glare struggling up through the abyss,
Scarce to our dizzy height. Look now above,
The angel said. I lifted up my eyes
And saw, as 'twere, the rayless countenance
Of Night spread over us. While I thus stood,
He, turning to me, said, Light once shone down
As a pure flood where thou art gazing now;
Its full, descending glories then were met

By kindred beams that rose up from these depths.
Where now thou seest Sin's deadly minister
Dwelt One most holy. Those dark forms who fled
From out thy sight 'midst thicker gloom to hide,
Where clothed in robes like that which fell to dust.
They feared not then to walk before God's sight,
For he had made them pure, and in his work
Beheld no fault. Then did these harps resound
To their sweet songs—this place was near to heaven;
They dwelt beneath heaven's light, amid its peace.
Such had their blissful lot forever been,
But that they turned from Him who did prepare
This blest abode and called them into life,
Heirs of its joy.

Shorn of all strength to harm
The steadfast soul, thither temptation came.
The Tempter stood without; he might not rend
Those strong ethereal bolts that power divine
Had placed to guard these portals, but his voice
Sent in, did mingle with the notes of praise,
Pleading for entrance. Then these spirits heard,
And listening, believed. They of themselves
Unbarred the gates no enemy might force—
Oh, what estate was then to sorrow given!
God's Spirit from the altar took his flight.
The Tempter entered—into chains he cast

Those who admitted him, and they henceforth
Became his slaves: yet not unwillingly,
Polluted by his presence, with his thoughts
Poured in their minds, they learned to love his ways.
Behold what Sin hath wrought—they who once basked
In heaven's own glorious beams, now hate the light,
And it is taken from them. Here shut up
With one they love to serve, with him they dwell
And work all evil. Yet I leave them not
To perish thus, the fate of their own choice.
Even in this place alone, my Witness* dwells,
Bearing his Lamp new-lighted at my throne,
But heeded not, and often quite cast out.
Sometimes I come and speak the words of Life,
Then if they hear, I bind the Fiend in chains,
Open their windows once again to light,
Which shall at length shine in more glorious streams
Than e'er they fell. For that day draweth near
When from each soul that hath returned to me,
All stain and spot of guilt shall be quite purged,
And holiness and joy shall fill it full.
But when they will not hear, I do at last
Call hence my Witness, and myself no more
Return to them, but leave them to their doom.

* Conscience.

THE THINGS AROUND US.

WE stand upon a point. Our native world
Spreading around us. In our daily walks
From youth to manhood, and thence to the grave,
A narrow circle, for the most doth bound
And limit our progression. While I seek
At morn th' unfinished task, and through the hours
That bring round eve again, toil standing there,
All Nature through her vast domain presents
To an All-Seeing Eye her various forms,
Perfecting those yet on the forward march
Of slow development—abating those
Which having reached their height, tend toward decay.
The infinite procession still moves on
Before Him who first ranged each atom there
In order, and gave motion to the whole.

Now in the forests, gloomy, dark, and deep,
That girt the burning zone, what wonders spread

All hidden from man's view! The lofty Palm,
That for a century hath been young and green,
Lifteth its head and watcheth o'er a scene,
Peopled yet solitary—trodden not
By foot of man, yet beautiful to the sense,
Beyond where lieth unadorned his home.
Behold the plumage of that fearless bird,
Where all the sombre colors are left out
And only those more gorgeous, brightened up
To their intensest lustre, gathered are.
No beauty loving eye e'er looked on it.
Amid this loneliness it rears its brood,
Encircling the veiled scene. It lives and dies
With millions that may not be numbered, thus,
Useless—a very waste, unless there be
Some other eye than man's that loves the sight.
Yon tree that bendeth to its golden fruit,
Dropping the ripest, dotting o'er the grass,
To man yields no repast. His hand stretched forth,
Never plucked one. They rot unwanted here,
While he on many a bare waste starves and dies.

Far northward, 'gainst some towering wall of ice
And o'er the snowy steppe, th' Aurora's light
Falls like the glimmer of a distant flame.

Look at its fountains bright and jets of fire,
Leaping and falling—how the flashes chase
The shadows that would shroud their field of sky!
Now at the zenith meeting, all its form
Like to some monarch putteth on a crown.
The lonely Laplander drawn by his deer
Swift through the polar night, beholds the scene,
Or he, some stranger there from temperate climes
Stands on the silent deck and thinks of home.

O'er the waste desert where no foot-print lies,
Or breathes a living thing, th' unclouded sun
Hangs at meridian height. Bare, outstretched sands
Return his rays, and meeting o'er the ground,
Beams falling and ascending parch the air.
Look! where th' horizon reaches toward the east,
Level to its verge—riseth a yellow mist!
Red clouds spring up like wing'd forms from the earth
And shroud the sky!—it comes, the dread Simoom!
From outspread, burning deserts doth it come,
Wrapt in its lurid mantle, breathing death.
Oh, mighty One, why stalkest thou forth here,
Where there are none to fear thee?—not a leaf,
With its green fluttering doth resist thy sway!
Here let thy path be still, while we will praise

The Power that hems thee in these lonely wastes,
Where thy swift desolating march shall be
Harmless—a prisoned wrath that cannot hurt.

Lo! there are fruitful fields that bud and bloom,
While burns the desert and congeals the pole.
This moment starts the tender shoot, or bursts
The blossom all along the outstretched boughs,
Till they seem mantled in tints of the dawn.
Rich valleys, where once sprang the rank, wild grass,
Now bring forth food for man. All in their midst,
With many a curve, so length'ning out their track,
Refreshing waters run. The mossy wheel
Turns dripping round—the fearless sunburnt child
Stands on the grassy brink, watching his line,
Or draws exulting forth the tiny prey.
Now comes the loaded wain—it stops beneath
The lofty portal—swift up to its height
Are borne the bursting sacks. Or, farther off,
With many a shout, the odorous, new-mown hay
Rolls in a vast load through the great barn-door.

Forever rolls the sea. Man comes and goes,
The individual soul lost in the sum
Of a vast generation. It in turn

Is swallowed up 'midst many that do pass
In swift succession. Every living thing,
Beast, bird, and all those fixed inanimate forms,
Which hold life's hid, mysterious principle,
Have their appointed time to wane and die.
But yet the ocean tosseth, bathing still
Its wide-stretched boundaries, that touch every clime,
Knowing not diminution, loss nor rest.
I stand upon the smooth and sandy beach,
And listen to his roar. The billows come
Tumbling and beating in. What an expanse
Do they roll from ! It seemeth desolate,
No living thing is seen, and yet beneath
The flood what myriads dwell ! Leviathan
Hath there his pastime—all the unknown shapes,
After their kinds appointed, that from him,
Down to the viewless mote, do swarm the main.
While thus I meditate by its calm side,
Somewhere, far out, the tempests are at war
On their old battle-field. Ah, poor, tost bark,
That reeleth 'midst the fight, they note thee not,
Such mighty warriors ! Would that thou wast there
Where o'er mid-ocean curves a cloudless sky,
And from the mast the sailor-boy looks down,

Far, far, through the clear deep, or rather come
Once more to anchor in the wished-for port.

Under a rocky coast, the hunter, borne
In his slight skiff, a narrow opening sees,
Left by descending tides. With trembling hand,
Slowly and watchfully, he entereth in,
Stooping to the low entrance. Lo, how grand
A temple for such door! The cave ascends
To a vast height, while he sits silently
Rocking on the black billow! From his side
Up, up aloft with glittering crystals hung,
The walls do climb, till meeting o'er his head,
They cover him with shadows. Where the waves
Do gently strike the rock, each blow resounds,
And he, one word of wonder uttering, hears
Unnumbered voices from th' inclosing night.
Still borne along in awe—yet grown more bold—
A distant sound salutes his ear: he floats
Past many a dripping crag—'neath arches grand,
Till from a steep before him waters fall.
The scene in its dim beauty is disclosed!
From the hid bowels of the earth they come,
Here poured forth through a dark way to the sea.
A snowy shaft of Stalactite stands up

Beside the cataract, o'ergrown with some vine.
O Nature, how deep dost thou touch the soul,
And how calls thy mute language! As these caves
Burrow beneath man's knowledge, from the day,
So dost thou enter in the hidden heart,
Where even ourselves look not.

*I climb some mountain that hath been piled up
'Mid the luxurious wastes of torrid climes,
First struggling through thick undergrowth of vines
And humid forests. As I o'ertop them,
Passing 'neath oaks, 'mid flowers of regions mild,
Grassy savannahs stretch far over these,
Where graze the gentle lama. Climbing still,
Lichens and mosses shroud the barren rocks,
Till having passed through each zone in th' ascent,
Snows block the upward path.

Night cometh down
And wraps the mountain. Lo! a falling star
Doth streak the azure o'er me. What is it?
But vapor? or some fragment of a world,
Flung like a taper down the steep abyss?
I look at it, and wondering while I stand,

* This piece was written after reading portions of Humboldt's *Cosmos*, to which, in several passages, it is largely indebted.

Do know as much in my simplicity
As all the sages learned. Since at the first
This canopy was spread, they have inquired—
God keepeth them as children!

Now I lift
My gaze higher up, to those bright planets sent
That share with us the sun's fair light and heat,
Ever round him revolving—sisters they,
And neighbors of our world, though wide-spread
realms,
That millions of earth's kingdoms would engulf,
Do lie between us and that fixed most near.
Above them stars unnumbered, dotting space,
Bright burning suns, hang twinkling. Thus they looked
On the unpeopled earth—thus later shone
On shepherds that kept watch by night—who marked
Each watchman in his station, and grouped them
In fancied shapes upon the page of heaven.
Fair Pleiades, Orion, named before
By holier pen; and since, all through the height
Men fix the constellations.

Yet higher up
I see now, dim, faint spots, not there defined,
In lines of distinct light, but scarcely seen.
Ah! there roll glittering worlds, numbered like dust,

Millions to make what seems a passing cloud !
From them the heavenly courier Light—that comes
Leaping from world to world—salutes my eye;
Yet even its flight took ages. So far off
Have we been placed asunder !

But I stand

Still on the earth. This mountain slope descends
Down to the fertile valleys, while beyond
My lofty station running past me up
Its peak afar, shines with eternal snows.
Methinks I see its glittering top dissolve,
While round it gather sulphurous clouds—I hear
Low moanings underground—then all the vast
And lofty tower trembles—fires leap out,
Pouring forth flaming streams ! Now from the black
O'erhanging, wide-spread canopy, dart down
Great lightning flashes—thunder lifts his voice,
Frighting the nations ! Lo, the fires within
Our world do only find a moment's vent ;
Soon shall they cease again, all driven back,
Pent in their unseen dungeon. There they burn
Quenchless beneath us, and thus do we live
On a thin covering to eternal flames,
'Neath space immeasurable. It is here
Man hath this fleeting being. It is here

He toileth—loves and hates, forgetteth God
Even in his presence, held upon his hand.
His Son, who made all worlds, and guideth this•
In its swift flight, once trod this place with us—
Yet is his second coming! Oh, may I,
When these scenes that have moved me all dissolve,
And shrink up as a parched scroll, be found
Numbered at His right hand!

C R O W S .

As the sun sinks, the lofty flying Crows,
Swayed by the wind, with outcries o'er my head,
Straggle toward the Pines where is their roost.
Far as my eye can reach their line extends,
Trooping aloft from fields were through the day
They gathered scanty food. When I was yet
A little child, I noted their long flight;
And still by that strange union which doth join
Things in themselves not like, among our thoughts,
Their evening journeys thus, to me, are linked
With winter's musings and imaginings.

POEMS IN RHYME.

MY COTTAGE.

My Cottage by the river side,
Is white, with shutters green ;
Before it flowing to and fro, the tide,
Behind, a garden spot is seen.
About the lattice of its porch is twined
Sweet honeysuckle, but two springs ago,
Planted by gentle hands; with nurture kind,
First it took root, then slow began to grow.
But soon it needed care no more,
And shadowed with its leafy arch, the door ;
Now swift its delicate tendrils run,
Clasping like fingers thin with every sun.
But not the honeysuckle nor the flowers
That edge the narrow walk, me most delight,
When the day darkens, and its toilsome hours
Fade beautiful as hours of rest, from sight,

Then slow returning through the wicket gate,
Do loving hearts and longing eyes await
My weary joyful steps. Oh, cottage dear,
Oh, river, ever flowing swift and clear,
Oh, flowers and vines, all that the eye may view,
The heart at first looks not to you—
When elsewhere satisfied, but not till then,
It turneth smiling unto you again—
Ye do not make it dark or bright,
But take your hues from its reflected light!

Last eve our little one ran out
To welcome me on my return,
Her pattering feet and full glad shout
Made viewless fires of love to burn.
She knew it not, but my hand took,
And led with sweet important look,
As to some new sight she would bring—
She led, I silent following;
Over the hall and up the stair,
Across the chamber: pausing there
Beside an open window, she
Pointed into an apple-tree—
There the great secret stood confessed
Among the boughs, a robin's nest!

Yet still she gazed up in my face,
My wonder and delight to trace.

It was, in truth, a touching sight.
Two branches midst the airy height,
Clasped the small house of twigs and hair.
The parent bird was brooding there,
Her bill and twinkling eye and head
Just raised above her hollowed bed.
With leaves, methought, above, beneath,
Rocked by the hid wind's faintest breath,
Here sitt'st thou through the summer's day;
Tempest nor calm fright thee away,
The midnight cool, the midday warm,
Nor rain nor drought may do thee harm;
And as thou sittest, brooding still,
Millions like thee o'er vale and hill,
'Midst beauties we may never see,
Are kept by the same Power as thee.
How doth the glittering, golden thread
Of love run through God's works! Though dead
To thought or wide intelligence,
Or even the full of grosser sense,
Yet in thy breast, thou little bird,
The same invisible chord is stirred—
Though fainter not less true 'tis heard—

Toward thy offspring as in me!
At this, not feeling sympathy
For wandering thought, my little guide
I found was pulling at my side.
To her the first surprise was done,
And somewhere else she would be gone.

Lovest thou a lonely path,
 There to wander forth unseen,
Not where man his dwelling hath,
 But where thought hath ever been ?
From my cottage, toward the west,
In musing mood nor step in haste,
One summer's morning now long gone,
I took my pilgrimage alone.
Along the little village street,
This friendly face and that to greet,
I passed, as oft I passed before,
Till meeting smiling friends no more,
I found my way had pierced a wood,
A silent hidden solitude.
For close beside the narrow road
To right and left the thick trees stood ;
Above, the parted branches through,
I saw a streak of deepest blue.

On either side, shut out the light,
The forests depths looked dark as night.

There is a joy to some unknown,
In wandering free, yet all alone,
From the great world's ear and eye,
Removed as from captivity!
Why is it viewless fetters bind,
While in the presence of our kind?
In nature's peopled haunts afar,
Where beings whom we know not are,
Though countless angels come and go,
With the loosed mind it is not so.

Here as I mused came many a thought,
Like swarms the candle's blaze hath brought,
Like them when that brief flame is o'er,
Lost in the dark, and found no more!
Is there some vast receptacle
For all the voiceless heart doth feel—
Doth feel but that no tongue can tell?
When opening wide before our sight
That vast world shall be filled with light,
How trifling will these labors seem,
The author's thought, the poet's dream!

More of each sort remains beneath
Than e'er was brought forth by the breath.

Now not a sound save some wild bird
Answering its distant mate was heard,
While closer round the thick, dense wood
Drew its dark curtains where I stood.
A naked footprint, pressed upon
The soft, white sand my eye fell on ;
It was a child's—a little one !
Pass by it if within thy home
 There is no child ; to thee 'tis hid,
Why in those forest depths alone
 At such a simple sight unbid
My heart should thrill and tears should rise,
Dimming the walk before my eyes.
Some chords within sleep idly there
Till new joys must assuage new care,
Not until late the heart unfolds
All the deep treasures that it holds,
And many an embryo of strength
Lies hid till mountains press at length.
So did this foot-print, reaching deep
Wake tender tones that in thee sleep ;
Up-summoned rose her form and face,
Each lineament I could trace,

Till my child's image, standing there,
Peopled the vacant, silent air!

The morning sun was risen high,
One white cloud floated in the sky,
Its great full folds like silver shone,
Against the blue it trod alone.
Beside my path I sat me down,
And, gazing on the heavenly isle,
Methought, if tempests are thy frown,
Sweet cloud, this calm rest is thy smile!
If now from heaven's depths afar,
Or some unknown and nameless star—
A spirit in descending flight,
Should break on my uplifted sight,
Nearer and nearer—yet more bright,
Until I saw his wings enfold,
And him on thy steep brink alight,
How would it ravish to behold!
But what is this? All fancy's boast
Is nothing, to that living host
Who flit around Heaven's viewless coast!
Viewless as yet, no eye can see
Those borders of eternity,
But soon to all 'twill opened be.

Oh may I then behold that land
And with the uprisen nations stand,
Who gather at the Lamb's right hand!

Slow passing on and wandering
Whither my unknown path would bring,
I entered soon an open space
Where, neath the shadow of the wood
Like some lone watcher in his place
A meeting-house secluded stood.
Beyond, along the public way,
With crumbling wall the graveyard lay;
The building had an ancient look,
But as I closer survey took,
I knew from all the speaking scene
It had for years deserted been.
Beneath the eaves, the dripping rain
Had worn deep channels in the plain;
No well-trod paths divided round
The grass, grown rank upon the ground;
Up to the entrance, a brief height,
Steps did not pilgrim feet invite,
But clamb'ring the steep chasm o'er,
I forced the slowly yielding door
That ope'd on Sabbath morn no more,

And found all that the winds withstood,
Was an upleaning piece of wood.
Within, strewn o'er the sunken floor,
The ancient seats, with ranks now broke,
Of a past congregation spoke.

Along one end, where all might see,
Was reared the preacher's gallery.
The stove yet there, o'errun with rust,
Held ashes on its hearth and dust,
And to the open doorway near
Stood the old, idle, vacant bier.

It was, in truth, a lonely place,
 Filling the heart with kindred gloom,
As though 'twere but a narrow space
 Between it and the tomb.

Yet said I, Back, thou rising tear,
For souls have entered heaven from here!
Now as I stood, I noted fall
A sunbeam on the floor and wall,
Creeping its daily journey slow,
Punctual from summer's heat till snow
While shadowy generations go!

'Tis often blind, the gloomy thought,
The pang by recollection brought.

True, they are gone, but tell me where?
If to repose from ceaseless care,
Is that a thing to make us grieve?
No, rather courage take, and live,
Hoping like freedom to receive.
For 'tis not changes that the eye
In outward objects doth descry;
The mouldering of wood and stone,
That makes the heart feel all alone;
It is the thoughts that with them come,
The images of those now gone,
Who look not on us one by one,
But in dim crowds around us throng.
Yet those whom thus we blindly mourn,
If dead in Christ, would not return,
Nor have us saddened at decay,

But rather gladdened at the sight,
As earnest that our own dark day,
O'er its brief limit shall not stay,

But soon emerge, like theirs, in light.
When thou art tempted then to share
In melancholy thoughts, beware,
These changes here, are glory *there*.

I went forth now to where the dead
Alone, or in close ranks were laid,

And started as I 'midst them found
An open grave within the ground.
From its new broken, crumbling side,
I saw 'twas yet unoccupied.
Here, as I scanned the depths beneath,
I spied there, on the moistened earth,
Striving to climb the steep sides bare,
A spotted lizard—fallen there !
It might not leave the narrow bed,
And as some clods fell, I could see
'Twas still, and lifting up its head
Gazed with its small bright eyes on me.
Is it such loathsome company,
We, who were scornful in time past,
Whom we should know, must keep at last ?
Ah eloquent, mute homily !
Yet we need not such argument,
For to each bosom such is sent—
As the great army on life's way,
Holds the hot conflict day by day,
Some moments, each one can recall,
When through some happening 'midst the strife
(Which not by chance did him befall),
He felt the nothingness of life !
'Twas but a moment brief—no more,
And he was blinded as before.

Oh, who can fix this flash of light,
That it shall never fail our sight?

Long musing round this spot I stood,
But bidding it farewell at last
I left it for the deeper wood.
Not far I walked, when from the road
A path wound, as to some abode.
I turned on it, and following,
Came to a hidden, crystal spring;
As close beside its grassy brink,
I prostrate kneeling bent to drink,
'Neath its smooth surface, imaged there,
I saw tall boughs, as in the air—
While through their openings farther down
Spots of the deep blue heaven shone;
Then, when I broke the falling light,
Lifting my hand to shade my sight,
These pictures from the surface fled,
And but a little way below
The white sand boiling, gleamed instead,
Pure, spotless, like a bed of snow.
I noted to the cool wet side,
Welled up the placid, limped tide,
Then overflowed and stole away,
Where thicker foliage dimmed the day,

The rivulet not heard nor seen,
But marked by growth of deeper green,
With here and there, amid the gloom,
The wild rose in its desert bloom.
How long it was I cannot tell,
Ere I now in deep slumber fell—
Then to my closed eyes came a sight,
Hidden from them when ope'd to light.
Methought the trees about me drew
Apart, and the long vista through,
I looked on the descending sun
As oft before then I had done,
Only the clouds and sea of gold
Seemed like a gateway to unfold,
Mighty and glorious to behold!
Within those gates, undimmed and clear,
'Midst heaven's unclouded atmosphere,
I saw afar a shining band
Look out toward our earthly land—
I saw them on the threshold stand!
Soon upward borne, as they had been
Glad heralds from this world of sin,
Three angels to them entered in.
Then quick that bright host gathered round;

I heard unnumbered voices sound,
The dead hath life! The lost is found!
At this I saw the heavens no more;
The earth closed round me as before.
Then, while I lay there wondering,
Methought beside that hidden spring,
Even with me in that lowly wood,
One of those same bright beings stood.
Know'st thou what thou hast seen? said he;
Dimly, I answered, doth dust see,
Even though I know, yet tell thou me.
Whene'er, he said, on swiftest wing
Angels to heaven tidings bring,
That but one soul hath turned to God,
Joy filleth all our vast abode!

When I awoke, unbroken shade
Upon the ground about me laid,
Telling that down the west, the sun
Below the forest's top was gone;
I rose, my day of thought was done!
Returning by the old church door,
'Twas lone and silent as before;
But for the open grave, I found
A narrow, nameless, new-made mound.

Methought I heard a voice now say,
Through the dim twilight round my way,
What profit hast thou earned to-day?
And thus I answered : Not below
Doth God his visible presence show,
But through his works we him may know.
I in their midst this day have stood,
And meditating, found it good
To feel for Him in solitude.
I have looked down upon the bed,
Open, new-made, to lodge the dead,
Whereon I soon must lay my head ;
Not masked with mausoleum high,
But just as I in truth must lie,
And with no other company.
While sleep upon my eyelids sate,
I saw afar Heaven's open gate
And those who there our souls await.
Because one sinner lost, was found,
I heard their hallelujahs sound,
I heard—a worm upon the ground !

THE DINING-ROOM OF THE OLD HOUSE.

THE cheerful group that gathered round me

One by one to rest has gone,

And this later hour hath found me

Sitting by the fire alone.

The vacant chairs about me stand

As they were left, on either hand—

I will now draw mine own up nigher,

And looking in the bright grate see

If in this winter-midnight's fire

One may not find some company.

In feeble, harmless mockery

Of the rude storm that blows without,

Look how a viewless breath of air

Traverses the red plain about,

Swaying each flame now here, now there!

As one in some lone room aside,

Sees pictured by the camera,

Within a spot a city wide,
With thousands thronging by the way ;
So musing by this fire alone,
All o'er its narrow breadth to-night
A pencilled hand doth seem to come,
Painting the world in mimic light.

A handful of red coals ! the earth
In the deep caverns of her breast
Did cover up their unknown birth—
Hidden as in eternal rest.
High o'er them wild flowers blossoming
Led on sweet summer. None to sow
Nor reap were there. As waters flow,
Came autumn's frost and winter's snow ;
And swift again returned the spring—
Even races changed, until at last
Each age, each fleeting moment passed
That should th' appointed period bring.
Men ope'd the mine, and from long night
Brought forth this handful to the light ;
Not dreaming of that sure decree,
By which at first 'twas formed for me,
To fall to ashes in my sight.
What an unwritten history,

Or unknown future yet to gain,
Doth to each casual thing pertain!
Thou feelest pride. The gem is thine,
That doth from o'er thy bosom shine.
But what is thy possession? Know

That as it beauteous now appears,
From breast to breast, from brow to brow,
It hath passed for a thousand years,
And so will pass—thou, not it lost,
Thou'rt but one of a mouldering host
That o'er its glittering path hath crossed!

Or come forth with me to the field—

The slender stem beside thy feet
Shall from its bark small fibres yield,

Which maiden hands shall bind and beat,
Combing each thin thread separate,
Till spun and wove, and bleached pure white
'Twill show fair linen in men's sight.
Who then can give it place or date?
Above some bold, stout heart 'twill rest,
Or, covering the more sensitive breast,
Will feel the oft hid throbs beneath;
Or worthless rags become at last,
Upon the trodden highway cast,

From out the gath'rer's loathsome store,
'Tis brought to change its shape once more.
Mingled with water pure and clean,

Torn to minutest particles,
Forth flows th' affluent pulpy stream,
Beneath th' rejected liquid falls—
Above, along the wirey plain
White spotless paper doth remain!
This will be written on. Some eye
That now would noteless pass it by
(Though first must intervene long years),
Will brighter grow or dim with tears,
When searching what this plant shall bear,
It reads the few words written there.
Perhaps within some volume bound
Impressed with words indelible,

'Twill wisdom's hidden ways expound,
Yielding him truth who loves it well—

What will it teach, or where be found
This lowly thing? Who, who can tell?

But other thoughts this place doth bring—

This was my father's roof! From here
The path from summer back to spring,
Doth at a glance now reappear.

Where, while I passed unconscious on,
As living things take root and start,
Sprang those deep feelings one by one,
And powers that fill man's mind and heart.
These, too, slow forming, buried deep
As treasures of the mine do sleep;
And as this handful in my sight,
Was formed to cheer this hour to-night,
So, for some good work in my day,
Each better trait within doth lay,
Till by God's help that work is done,
And I back unto dust have gone.
Nor though he causeth none to sin,
Was the Creator ignorant,
That when I had a wanderer been
From virtue's paths, where I was sent,
My passions wasting at their will,
Would quench affection, kindle strife,
Mingling the good with how much ill,
According to my checkered life!
He knew it all. Through centuries,
That gathered were as autumn leaves,
He ne'er foreordered, kindly care,
Nor act of love or friendship fair,
But one to do the deed was there.

So too each evil deed foreseen,
Had long before so thwarted been,
That e'en with virtue it took part,
And worked good for the new-born heart.

How different, then, His view from ours;
We dimly scan a few dark hours—
But before Him, as one page lie,
The past and all futurity!
We wait th' event that shall befall,
He doth each in its order call,
And e'er the first had summed up all!
To us what hath been, is forgot,
What shall be, yet unknown, is not;
To Him all equidistant, clear,
The age long gone, the moment here—
By doubts, nor fears, nor hopes, ere tost
Naught new nor old is, found nor lost.

While musing thus secure and warm,
As in some fortress shut from harm,
Still howls the wintry wind without,
Still tosseth each blue flame about,
While from far wastes or ocean's shore,
The storm beats to my very door.

What thin partition 'tis divides
From icy cold and swelling tides!
What different scenes each other pass,
Parted but by a pane of glass!

But rising now from my warm seat
 (Not in the body, but in thought),
I go forth from this calm retreat—
 Ah, by one step what distance brought!
Here it is bleak, no warmth, no light—
All earth and heaven wrapt in night,
While viewless, but with loud wild cry
The armies of the air rush by.
I journey on, for though storms blow
O'er rising floods, through fire or snow
Thought on its path unharmed may go—
Till where a river spreadeth wide,
And lofty shores rise by its side,
I open a small wicket gate.
'Tis midnight, dark and desolate.
Against the black skies dimly seen
Rock a few boughs of evergreen.
Along the narrow path I tread
 (Oft have I trodden it before),
Till 'neath a latticed archway led,
 I ope th' inhospitable door,

Then like some spirit through the gloom,
For living thing nor light is there—
Above, below, from room to room,
O'er vacant hall and quiet stair
I pass 'midst unused furniture.

This is the place where, when glad Spring
Doth from the deep earth blossoms bring—
I come, with those I love, to dwell.
Winter, her brother, robed in snow,
Not as some say, her envious foe,
Sh' embraceth here, and bids farewell;
While round the stream her warblers sing,
And this white cottage by its side.
Lo, what a change! Then, open wide
Doors, windows, tempt the gentle air
Now stripping mighty forests bare—
The winds as for its ruin sent
Do shake this trembling tenement.

Standing all lonely in the dark,
I hear a rustling near me—hark!
And over by the opp'site wall
Something is moving white and tall;

What is it? Ah, now I can see
'Tis but the window's drapery!
Though sash and shutter both are fast,
Through some small crevice creeps the blast—
A little rill from storms that blow—
Tossing the curtains to and fro.
Ha! what strange doings, sounds, and sights,
Are here through the long winter nights!
I might be sad. The sombre thought
To me by less is often brought,
But I will rather think of when,
 'Neath calm and cloudless heavens serene,
Sweet summer will be here again,
 Waving her leafy robes of green.
Soon shall break forth that milder day,
Soon 'neath the shade my child shall play,
Watching the robin twine his nest;
 Or, grouped all on the bank's steep brink,
We'll stand in presence of the west,
 While down its steep the sun doth sink.
For so the full and bounteous scope,
Of the good promise gone before,
That seed-time, harvest, autumn's store,
Revolving shall fail never more,
Giveth me liberty to hope!

Only this one remembrance
Driveth these glad thoughts blushing hence;
It is that for long summers past,
 Given me in this place of good,
I at the Giver's feet have cast
 But moments brief of gratitude.
Not that the prospect far and fair,
 Which nature spreads before this place,
Mingling her floods with earth and air,
 Till of a still morn I can trace—
As 'twere let down to wet mine eyes—
An image faint of paradise;
Not that this doth entrance my sight,
 For ever while I gaze I see
Written in hues of deeper light,
 My own and their mortality!
Not that the love of beings here,
 Which filleth up, doth drown my heart;
In the fond gaze of those most dear
 Still frames the sentence, We must part—
Nay, as for these things well I know
 All that earth to the spirit yields,
Are but the seeds of flowers that grow
 To fullest bloom on heaven's fields;

But 'tis, that sin or indolence
Doth fetter still each new-born sense.
I do believe!—each blessing sent,
 E'en in my sight traced from above
Is an unanswered argument!
 My soul confesseth—longs to love,
Nay more, doth love: and with Faith's eye
 Uplifted, sees afar the blest,
Assured of immortality,
 From even these tossings, final rest,
Yet is it dull, insensible,
Feeling not what it knows so well.
Oh, when at times roused from their sleep,
 Or broken from their captive's chain,
My passions do new revels keep,
 Reigning as 'twere within again;
When at such times a viewless hand,
 Leads me to some still spot aside,
And lifts the veil—amazed I stand,
 That such dread tenants may abide,
Still in a heart that loveth God,
The place he chose for his abode!
And could I mine own madness tame,
Or with foul hands wash out the stain,
If none now to my succor came?

Ah, I have seen! Let others boast
Of deep gulfs in their own strength crossed,
But as for me, since that first day
When, moved by grace, I turned toward heaven,
Each briefest footstep of the way
Was made in strength by Jesus given,
Strength that whate'er its cost may be
Was given costless unto me.

The old clock in the hall strikes—one!
Its sound doth summon wandering thought
That far beyond the storm had gone.
Back to the fireside I am brought—
The fireside! Ah, we may write
Strange things of it—how greatest men,
Men who sway kingdoms by their might—
When from the world returned again
They sit thus musing here alone,
Are conscious that their hearts are one,
Even with the lowliest of their kind.
Forced back upon the unflattering mind
They learn once more how little things
Oft touch the deepest, tenderest strings.
The trifles of their childhood set

In none of fame's thin drapery,
Rising before them, homely yet,
Move them as they move thee or me.

Thou scarce canst see by this dim light
Yonder where mingled shadows fall,
Near to the ceiling's dusky height,
A nail driven part way in the wall.
It is a spot where one bright ray
Used every morn to herald day,
Nay heralds yet the morn—come far
By many an unknown world and star
Ere there its glittering flight doth stay.
In years long gone—I count them not—
My sister hung beside that spot
The cage that held her singing bird ;
Trilling all day, its notes were heard
Seeming thanksgivings for her care,
Sending sweet music everywhere.
Now, were she sitting by my side
Still, when the recollection came,
'Twere one that might a time abide ;
Much since hath changed, much the same,
The smile would mingle with the tear,
But—oh, my friend, she is not here !

Is it not strange that at this hour,
When all her past crowds to my breast,
One lone remembrance comes with power
Rising undimmed above the rest?
That of an unkind word by me
Which she once wept at silently.
Why doth it thus come? 'Twas forgiven
And blotted by a hand above,
I trust, from out the book of heaven.
Were there no words of tender love
That as I muse to-night alone
With melancholy joy might come?
Ah, not for joy is it now sent
By Him who summons up the thought,
For me a better gift is meant,
To me instruction hath it brought.
The present shall become the past,
Even as those years have from me fled,
May I not, lingering till the last,
Number those living with the dead?
The word to-day, told in the ear,
That makes some wounded heart to burn,
May, when that heart shall not be here,
Back to my bosom barbed, return.

When we do look within to find,
Whose image on our breasts we wear,
We learn that not the loftiest mind
Doth grave its name most deeply there,
But the forgiving, true and kind;
And knowing this, and that above
All offerings that can rendered be,
To us, we most do covet love,
It hath a marvel been to me,
That o'er ourselves the victory
We strive not harder to attain,
Though for ourselves alone the gain!
Doth not a hasty spirit fling
That one first drop of bitterness
Into Love's never-failing spring,
That else would flow forth but to bless?
Or like an unquenched spark it lies,
Even 'midst the gathered bonds of home,
It fires, it snaps the tender ties
That do bind brethren into one.
And I have marked its wondrous power—
One early frost blights all the plain,
It nips the bud, it kills the flower—
'Tis winter ere they bloom again.

For, to put simile apart,
The passion lodged in me so deep,
Its likeness hath in every heart,
Which but a word may rouse from sleep.

Oh for that calm and equal mind
Whose peace a breath may not disturb,
Who, though the soil seems all unkind,
Some hidden virtue still will find,
And its own enmity doth curb.
Few spots of earth have fruitless proved
When faithful hands have come to till;
Few hearts but some have justly loved,
Few but we may love if we will.
Are any pure? Hath Love a law
By which unmingled, spotless worth
Alone may claim fair gifts from her?
Then may she turn to-day from earth!
But bands who live by lawless strife,
Some pledges from her still do keep,
True each to each they war through life,
And when the parting cometh, weep!

Affection then asks to be sought
Like veins in treasure-yielding ground,

Perchance from depths it must be brought,
Upon the surface may abound—
Somewhere the ore is always found.
And having found it, oh how fair
Th' uncovered mass shows to the light!
The whole, wide, stony waste doth wear
New worth and beauty in our sight.
The gold is reached! Its hue we see!
All hid in our own breasts of such
By some mysterious alchemy
Thrills at its first life-giving touch—
Love is the child of sympathy!

Yet well I know nor reasoning,
Nor the most finished argument
Can to our hearts this temper bring,
By which we search in everything,
For cause to love: 'tis heaven-sent.
Much less can pictured portrait fair
Of its mild beauty and its power,
Give it a lasting being there—
Mere sentiment dies with the hour.
For like all virtues this must bear—
Here, banished from its native place,
Housed, pent up with a hostile race—
Its cross, and even thorns must wear.

He who would keep it must go armed,
Marsh'ling his powers, not 'gainst the foe,
But that the foe may pass unharmed,
Willing to deal his own blow.
Nay, even friends, when thought hath gone,
By very kindness tempted on,
And virtue's seeming helplessness,
May wound him whom they first should bless.

How shall we gain this treasure, then,
This charity which doth let fall
The veil that malice lifts, again?
Thus come we to the sum of all.
As earth in no far desert hold,
Nor to the centre of her sphere
Doth treasure such as this enfold,
More pure than is her virgin gold—
Vain is the hope that searcheth here.
We must look up! As fair appear,
Wide stretching o'er some moonless night,
The countless worlds there robed in light,
So all heaven's virtues, glorious, too,
Hang o'er us hidden from our view;
And as those worlds revolving far
Beyond the gazer's influence are,

So when the soul with opened eye
Those stars sees on that upper sky,
It feels its deep infirmity.
If thou canst curb by thine own force
One planet rolling in its course,
And bring it captive unto thee—
Then hast thou gained the power at length
Unaided by thy native strength,
To pluck one spotless virtue down
From heaven and cry, It is mine own!

Yet 'neath these virtues do we live,
And though with blind polluted sense,
May of their healing power receive
And be ruled by their influence.
They are for us! for knowest thou not,
Who, when ascending up on high
Bore with him gifts his blood had bought,
And captive led captivity?
He will bestow them still on thee,
If humbly sought with reverent care,
So now come we to victory,
Yea, the reward too is hid there—
The power that virtue wins is PRAYER!

Oh, wondrous Power, by which alone,
I, born to want and poverty,
May to the glorious threshold come,
Yea, pass up to the very Throne—
How am I poor possessing thee?

I stand on earth—thou lift'st me hence—
I reach to starry heights sublime,
I touch their loftiest eminence,
I deathless virtues pluck from thence,
And fill my bosom—they are mine!

Flickering within its socket, weak
My candle scarce doth hold its flame,
It sinketh now—now doth it seek,
Running swift down the wick again,
To draw new life and sustenance
As it was wont to draw it thence.
Slow it returns; the store is done—
Now but a spot it hath become—
'Tis fainter, fainter—it is gone!
But the spark left is not quite fled,
It sends forth wreaths of smoke o'erhead,
It varieth like the flame before—
Plays the same game to hope, once more
Till it too darkens, and is dead.

I marvel not that men have seen,
Ever in this slight incident,
Pictured, the moment when hath been

A summons to the spirit sent—
So doth the body hoard its breath,
And yield unwillingly to death;
But in this likeness we forget

That all of languor imaged there
Is of the body!—youthful, yet,

The soul doth but its wrappings wear,
Which, loosened, falling off at length,
Leave it freed in immortal strength!
Methinks, at such a time and place

Did heavenly heralds, as of old,
Meet and speak with us face to face,

I might celestial converse hold.
He who by darkness compassed round,
Slumb'ring upon the desert ground,
Saw angels in th' illumined air
Ascending and descending there,
While One above more glorious stood,
Lay not in deeper solitude.

But this may not be; day nor night
Shall e'er unveil Him to my sight,
Who, from all flesh hath hid in light.

Is he then not?—Is there no God?
Do I whose wisdom cannot show
How the green blade doth spring and grow,
'Midst worlds that mock at me from thence,
Stand the first, high Intelligence?

Yet banished here, far from the skies,
Groping 'midst this world's gloom about—
My lamp obscured by mists that rise,
Not of the Truth, but mine own doubt,
I've said, To see Him with mine eyes,
Oh, that some path might find Him out!
So foolish am I?—Hath his word
Then ceased? or is his providence
With daily utterance no more heard?
Turn I from these to grosser sense?
Should some pure Seraph, even now,
In answer to my call appear,
Bright from the throne where such do bow—
Doth not a still voice yet more near
Whisper all that I then might hear?
Thus would he speak, Though legions were
Like me, to teach, they could impart
To thee no more abounding light

Than that now shed upon thine heart.

Wandering long since in rayless night
Thy Saviour found thee. On a way
He placed thy feet that upward led,
Yet told thee dark clouds round it lay;

Thy soul rejoiced, was comforted
Through darkness even, to hope for day—
Now, dost thou murmur, faint and pine
Because those promised clouds are thine?
Think'st thou such mists can blind his eye,
Or seen not, he hath passed thee by?

Canst thou not trust? Be still, oh man,
And when 'midst shadows thou must wait,
Know they are part of love's great plan—
Remember now thy first estate!

Weary not of thine earthly days—

Cut off from them, how couldst thou rear
An offering to thy Maker's praise?

Nor let thine earthly task appear
Beneath thee; and in secret cry,

All things are brief and fleeting here—
My soul doth loathe them, let me die!
Doth he who polisheth the gem
To deck some royal diadem,

Or shapes the block for palace walls
Work velvet-clothed, in gilded halls?
So is thy task to thee unknown,
But when it shall be done at last,
These fleshly garments from thee cast,
And earth's vast house of toil o'erthrown,
Then shall its end to thee be shown—
Each block, each jewel shalt thou see
Fixed beauteous in eternity!

THE TWO GRAVES.

HERE are two graves with flowers overgrown—

No monument doth tell who lies beneath,
Or how the swift-winged years have come and flown
Since they were laid here by the hand of death.

Yet was there once a time when smooth and green

This sod unbroken lay in the cool shade;
Renewed each Spring its grassy dress was seen,
Till autumn frosts returning, made it fade.

This virgin soil, that ne'er upheaved before,

To dust received those who of dust were born,
Then closed again to be disturbed no more
Till they shall rend it on the Judgment morn.

I now, a wand'rer on a toilsome way,
To view this quiet resting-place, am brought,
And lingering here as fades the summer's day
Find 'mid its quiet beauties food for thought.

Though still and lonely now, I do not doubt
There has another scene been witnessed here,
When from the stricken heart deep grief flowed out,
And where these flowers spring, fell the bitter tear.

But now perchance the stricken heart is gone
That yearned for those who lie beneath this spot;
Perchance of all who tread the earth, not one
Remembereth their image or their lot!

And this is but the common fate of all—
The world forgets us, though we loved it well,
And the few kindred hearts that weep our fall,
Soon following us are fallen where we fell.

It is not then upon your earthly state,
Ye nameless slumb'ers who lie here at rest,
That lingering thus I muse and meditate
As fades the day along the golden west!

Though ye had many lovers and few foes,
 Though crown or coronet hath pressed your brow,
Though ye were poor and suffered all the woes
 Of keenest want—what doth it matter now?

Earth's sorrows and her sweetest joys forgot,
 The things ye sought in vain and those ye won—
That pitied and that envied in your lot
 Are now alike all gone, forever gone!

Not to the fleeting things of time, which die
 As this frail dust returns to God, its breath,
Thought turns with silent, retrospective eye,
 But to the soul, the soul that knows no death.

Were ye of spirits broken, contrite, meek,
 Radiant on earth with Heaven's hues of love?
Did ye pass here the offered dross to seek
 The pure gold of the treasury above?

Blest thought! It may be that the path of prayer
 Across life's waste these mould'ring feet have trod—
That cheered by faith, through all this night of care
 With joyful steps they hasten'd home to God!

In sweetest slumber rests the weary head

If Jesus the still watches o'er it keep,

More soft than couch of down this narrow bed

When here He giveth his beloved sleep.

THE RIVER.

I SAT in my porch beside the River

Upon a cloudy morn,

While the waters were smooth as polished glass

And the great wide flood did silent pass,

With no ripple upon it borne.

Close by the brink of the steep high shore

A few steps from my cottage door,

Branching and tall and fair to see—

There grew a Balm-of-Gilead tree.

Its boughs were loaded with morning dew,

Among them a golden Oriole flew,

He whistled and hopped from stem to stem,

And the dew-drops fell in showers again.

Oh bird, who bid thee, tell me who,

To scatter these glittering drops of dew?

Now down the stream on the sandy beach,
Where the river inland takes a reach,
I see forms on the narrow ledge,
Toiling up from the water's edge—
They are fishermen, their net they draw.
Out in the current all night it lay—
This morn enforcing nature's law
They seek to collect from the stream his debt
For the deep, broad highway to him let
By the shore, and to them the stream doth pay.

Back from the water upon the green
The prey are thrown. With silvery sheen
On the fresh grass, a lifeless heap,
Lie the lost wanderers of the deep.
Then comes the dealer from the town,
The price is named—he counts it down,
The men their long night's labor sell.
Borne with the tide the buyer hastes
To where the outspread city lies;
As there to-morrow, some diner tastes,
The captive dressed to please him well,
Little he'll think of the fisherman's prize,
Or of him who sits here to moralize!

Far over toward the opposite shore—
Seeming a toy in bulk, no more,
I see a lab'ring boat pressed slow,
Against the current's baffling flow,
And the rower's form now can I see
Sway back and forward measuredly.
Whither thy course, oh little boat,
That safe o'er wat'ry depths dost float?
And what thy thought, oh weary rower,
That plies the oar with ceaseless power?
So ships do dot the ocean wide,
O'er vales and hills beneath they ride,
Each on its path from sea to sea,
Each toward some port from shore to shore,
Some to arrive right merrily,
But some to see land never more!

Hark, a loud splash!—see, down it goes!
A great fish that had leaped in air,
From the still river. Round it throws
The thin spray like a fountain there,
And widening circles quickly spread
All o'er the glassy, liquid bed,
Marring the mirrored wat'ry plain,
Where curved the heavens beneath again.

How many play now in the deep
O'er which my glance doth vigil keep,
Though on the surface all is still!
Little we know of what doth fill
The space about us. For our sight
Is partial only; boundless height
Towers above us; depths below
Sinking far from our knowledge, go.
Objects we note not, daily passed,
Are tenanted by peoples vast;
The very air that empty seems,
Holding no forms save of our dreams,
And marred when but a mote floats by,
Is so but to th' imperfect eye.
Yet skill to do that dim eye hath
That task for which it was designed—
It lighteth here our narrow path,
To worlds unnumbered leaves us blind.

Thus do I sit and muse alone
In seeming idleness—till flown
Are precious moments that my toil
Might have enriched with golden spoil.
And yet, perchance, some weary heart
That once dwelt 'midst a kindred scene

But now is shut by want apart,
May thus be brought where I have been,
And through my eyes with new delight
Look on each old, familiar sight.
We service to each other owe
Of various sort: in need we go,
Beside the visible distress
From hunger, thirst, and nakedness—
Oft'ner than these the want we find
Deep out of sight, within the mind.
From him who hath not gold to give,
We yet may precious gifts receive.

But e'er thou turnest now away
From the still stream—a moment stay,
While I rehearse another thought
By its calm beauty often brought.

When tranquil morning fills the skies,
Or noon to heaven's blue height doth rise,
Or when at evening gently fall
Those beams that bathe and soften all,
Then gazing this deep river o'er
To yonder fair and distant shore,

I think upon the Promised Land.
How I shall one day pass the flood,
And e'en as on that shore I stood,
So on its blissful borders stand.
Then on those very fields of green
Methinks bright winged forms are seen
Hasting with smiles to welcome me—
They draw me dripping from the tide,
Each strikes the bright harp by his side,
They shout at my delivery!
Ah! yonder shores of wood and field
Cannot in truth such blessings yield,
Nor there have heavenly ones their birth:
'Tis but my thought! Though I were there,
I still this evil heart would bear
And meet but dwellers on the earth.
Yet thus I love midst visible things
That busy hope which to me brings
Those heavenly sights that like them seem,
For there is such a better land,
And I upon its shores will stand,
Rising from Jordan's cold, deep stream.

There if thou Christ's disciple art,
Shall each throned sorrow flee thy heart

That now with scourgings doth oppress;
Labor that shackles here thine arm
Shall lose its power to do thee harm,

And God thy upward path shall bless.

Toil shall not there mix with my song,

Nor shall I, when my task is done,

Find motives mingled so therein,

That e'en my work most perfect, must

Become a thing of simple trust,

Lest it be counted wholly sin.

Oh! glorious day—oh! wished for morn,

Still with rich hues my skies adorn,

But burn not yet too dazzling bright,

Lest I faint here 'midst griefs and pains,

Nor patient bear what yet remains,

With Heaven so opened to my sight!

ON THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN.

How various are the forms,

O Death, which coming to us thou dost wear,
Upon the battle-field—in ocean's storms,
Or wasting us by heavy loads of care.

Or mostly with the pangs

Of slow disease—'midst trembling, hope, and doubt
The precious life by but a weak thread hangs;
The flame sinks low, reviveth—and goes out!

But not thus didst thou come

To him who lying down with us at night,
Thankful to share a cherished earthly home,
Entered a better Rest ere rose the light.

We woke that Sabbath morn
To cold, dull prayers and feeble offerings;
We knew not, even then, his songs were borne
From where the soul, new-robed, with angels sings!

Would we the spirit call
Back from its seat before th' uplifted Throne?
So far a height—so vast a depth to fall?
The thought shows heavenly things to us unknown.

How can the spirit wear
That hath arrayed been in a blood-washed dress,
The flesh again?—How from communion there
Walk with us through this howling wilderness?

One rapturous moment brief
In Heaven—one step upon that blissful shore,
Unfits us for this world—its cares, its grief,
We may not know their touch forevermore!

Ah! not for us to mourn
Do Christ's dead call. Nor may we weeping stand
As if o'er some dark ocean they were borne—
We toss 'midst storms, but they have reached the land!

PHEBE ANN JACOB'S COTTAGE.

WITHIN this little house alone
Dwelt one who to the heavens hath gone;
Of lowliest race, to bondage born,
No lofty deeds her life adorn;
She rested here at each day's close,
Here with the morn to labor rose.
Poor was she, and her dwelling poor,
I would have blushed to change with her;
But where on high the angels bow,
How would my soul love to change now!

Often I saw her laboring nigh,
Oft, without thought, have I passed by,
And spoken kindly, for all knew
Great were her virtues—her faults few;
Yet did I never realize
That here dwelt one so near the skies.

The hushed and silent midnight air
From here hath borne aloft her prayer ;
The dim faint dawn, the middle day,
Evening, that sweeps day's beams away,
The task not yet begun, or o'er,
Have seen her close this humble door,
And go within, alone to pray.

This very room that stoops so low,
Held joys the Palace scarce may know,
When to the waiting heart prayer brings
To the banquet there, the King of kings.

It was within these narrow walls,
At some unknown hour of the night,
Death stood, as when the soul he calls,
Slow rising on the failing sight.
Throughout the land, an hour before,
He knocked at many a rich man's door,
And heard the cry of agony,
The prayer within : Oh, pass me by !
But when he reached this lowly cot,
The prayer was, Ah, pass by me not !
And Death himself stood rev'rently.

Tell me, my soul, now none are nigh,
 And we may commune secretly,
 Though thou wert offered Genius, Power,
 Fame, Riches, for the dying hour,
 Wouldst thou not all of them forego,
 And gladly want and suffering know,
 If but at last, his dreaded dart
 Might come so welcomed to thy heart?

SAVED BY GRACE.

'Tis vain, the endeavor to make pure
Our hearts before God's sight,
They cannot our own search endure,
By Reason's partial light.

For though with man, pride may forbid,
We should one fault confide,
Who feels not in his bosom hid,
That many yet abide?

But when the spirit hath been taught
God's perfect Law, it feels
The sin that tinges but the thought,
The guilt no word reveals.

What seemed to mar some acts before,
 From passion, envy, hate,
 Now spreading blots the whole life o'er,
 And proves our whole estate.

With this new light, doth knowledge come
 That succor is on high;
 That but One can avert man's doom,
 His nature purify.

But not quite grasped yet, by the heart,
 These new truths to it given,
 We mostly still would weave a part
 Of our own dress, for heaven.

We strive, but sin still cleaves to us;
 We weep o'er faults confessed,
 And cry: Ah, ne'er polluted thus,
 Shall we attain that Rest!

Until oft raised and fall'n again,
 Oft baffled to and fro,
 We find our strength is spent in vain,
 And that it must be so.

Then giving those hard labors o'er,
Which would for sin atone,
We're taught more deeply than before:
Grace saves us—Grace, alone!

THE PHILADELPHIA LIBRARY.

DEMURE and without pomp, but strong in might,
Here marshalled is a host all officered,
Unarmed, yet ever ready for the fight—
Silent, yet even by the deaf ear heard.

Soldiers not fleshly, but that cope with thought,
Their wounds are to the surgeon never told;
Husbandmen who the seeds of truth have brought,
That buried deep bring forth an hundred fold.

They go forth noiselessly to conflict, each
Some separate field, some single foe to find;
They fight where the swift bullet cannot reach,
On the wide battle ground of heart and mind.

And here are thousands of them ! at their call,
Though voiceless, youth and hoary age I see,
Come to bear forth this host, who one and all
Aim but for good or ill, at victory.

Friend, were I to approach thee now and seek
As but a stranger to press my discourse,
Thou wouldst esteem me rude, and strong or weak,
My argument unsought would lack its force.

Yet one as strange thou bearest with thee hence,
As true to succor, or as bold for strife ;
One without form of flesh or utterance,
But to thy rational part as full of life.

Unto thy home thou hast'nest with it—there
Wilt bring it to thy chamber, and when night
Lifteth a little while man's load of care,
Wilt trim for it, perchance, thy lonely light;

Then, as the young disciple doth draw near,
When Wisdom whispers of her hidden way,
Thou patient waiting wilt bend down to hear,
And search what in its treasure-house may lay.

Sweet poison that enravishes the taste,
Hangs like a fragrant spell upon the breath,
But turns the budding heart into a waste
Barren and noxious, a wide waste of death!

Or doth that treasure-house rare jewels hold,
Hidden there by some pilgrim gone before?
Robes undefiled that may the soul enfold,
Clothing it as a Prince forevermore?

Oh, Reader, or thou man of sober thought,
Come forth with me. Look through a golden gate;
The sun departs! Yet not for this I brought
Thee to behold his fading, regal state.

But turn thy back toward him and gaze on high;
The light from out heaven's spreading arch of blue
Ebbs like a flood! Now searching all the sky,
One star burns faint—and there another too!

They come, they come, th' innumerable host—
See how they thicken through the unveiled height!
Oh sea, that knoweth not a boundary coast!
Oh, space eternal, stretching from my sight!

Know'st thou that disembodied soon, thy soul
May pass from world to world, through that far space
When He, whom all worlds worship as they roll,
Shall call thee to behold Him, face to face?

Little we know the value of an hour,
Whether we read, or speak, or muse, or write—
Risen again—clothed with condemning power,
Moments shall stretch like armies on our sight!

Up from the tomb their multitudes shall climb,
And gather round us. The awakening eye
Op'ning from death, shall look again on Time
Unsepulchred, its deeds and thoughts brought nigh.

"PUTTING OFF."

STRIVING in coward listlessness

Each effort still to shun—

How can the aid we pray for, bless

Our labors ne'er begun?

Go boldly up—each hind'rance meet,

Assail that nearest by,

To win a part, to bear defeat

Is better than to fly!

How know'st thou but some gem most rare

Hid in this moment lies?

Time is a mine. Nor here nor there—

Sure are we of the prize.

He who the search unwearied keeps
With zealous, constant mind,
May win, perchance, but he who sleeps
Surely no wealth shall find.

The hour will not fold its wings,
Onward thy steps are pressed—
Slothful and diligent it brings
Where both alike must rest.

If it be sweet, when day is past,
Though not increased thy store,
To think not to th' endeavor lost
Its fruitless moments were,

How, sweeter far, will be at length
As wanes life's setting sun,
The thought, not wasted was its strength,
Though nothing more be won.

A U T U M N .

FROM the vale up the mountain's side

Like a vast billow, now we see
Autumn doth roll her golden tide
O'er field and forest, flower and tree.

In wailing gusts the winds grown chill,

Mock at the weak bright-shining sun,
The cry comes forth from vale and hill,
Summer is done—sweet summer's done !

THE LOFTY PLACE.

HE who fills a lofty place,
Though he climbed there to do good,
If one spot his robes deface
Shows it to the world abroad.

So the man who to some work
Of kindness would devote his days,
If 'mid his virtues one fault lurk
May gain, perchance, more blame than praise.

And some, it may be, who in heart
Are true—and long with earnest will
To act, take not the laborer's part
Because they feel their frailties still.

And truly, bitterness he reaps
Who sowing zeal, the world calls it,
For some sin o'er which he too weeps—
The cloaking of the hypocrite!

Yet is it just, thus to desert
For our small loss the world's great cause?
Willing to toil but bear no hurt,
Serve we our King for man's applause?

No, nor doth censure me defraud,
Though battling in my place I be,
The good I do belongs to God,
My faults alone belong to me.

And why should I so keenly feel
What foes may even falsely say—
Am I not for sins deeper still
Mine own accuser day by day?

My Master but fulfils my word,
I tell him for his sake alone,
Not mine own gain, I wield the sword
And praise him for my victories won!

'Tis well. In mine infirmity,
Not in my strength shall swell my song—
Mine own need shall my glory be,
When weak I am, then am I strong!

Only, O Lord, thou near me keep,
Lest not her foes, but Truth, I bind,
Nor let me from man's scoffing reap
New pride, but lowliness of mind.

Then shall thy Word be far proclaimed,
But I who speak, unhonored passed—
The crown not by my merits gained,
Yet worn, thine own free gift at last!

THE HISTORY OF A DOLLAR.

By looking on me you may see,
 Raised in small figures from the gold,
The number Eighteen-fifty-three;
 I am, then, scarce yet four years old.
The milling round my narrow rim,
 The Laurel-wreath, the lettering there,
By Traffic's hand not yet worn dim,
 Show, as at first, distinct and fair.
'Tis true, for many ages gone,
A little shapeless mass unknown,
I glittered 'neath a mountain stream,
 'Midst pebbles that around me lay,
Nor did my worth above theirs deem,
 As born to higher lot than they.
But rude men coming forth at last,
Scooped us both up in eager haste;
I was retained—they back were cast,

(Though formed alike, the stones and I,
'Twas hard to guess the reason why.)

Brief with these strangers was my stay ;
They hoarding me with many more,
Sent their accumulated store

We knew not where—far, far away,
Nor saw I now again the light,
Till on a morning calm and bright
I was poured forth upon a floor,

'Midst drossy piles of various tint;
The room was broad-and bare and high;
I heard the clank of wheels near by,

In short, I was now in the Mint.
Here the engraved and polished dies,

Pressed each to each, with crushing power,
My lustre, perfect shape and size,
The letters in relief that rise

Gave me as you behold this hour.

Next, where more like me, bright and new,

Were piled along in even rank,
I found myself exposed to view,

And learned the place was called a Bank.
Ever swayed to and fro the door,

And ceaselessly the great crowd came—
Of all the purpose seemed the same.

I marvelled what they came there for;
Till lengthening lines of emptiness,
Showing our bright heaps less and less,
For the first time I was aware
We were the great attraction there,
And that the marble building high,
The ranks of clerks there writing by,
The comers multitudinous,
And all the eye saw, were for us.

* * * * *

Soon parted with as change, or pay,
I found myself that very day

In a dim lonely-looking room,
Where one,* a table leaning o'er,
'Midst dust and manuscripts and gloom,

Seemed on a written page to pore.
Awhile he wrote, he paused, and then
Wrote on at swiftest pace again,
As though the walls that prison thought
Were breached and crowds were rushing out.
Again he paused, and silently
With dipped pen and uplifted eye,

* The Philosopher.

Waited on thought—but as before
Without him ope'd the wondrous door,
So now, beyond his weak assault,
'Twas shut and held by bar and bolt.
Then from that waiting attitude
Relaxed, by brief delay subdued,
His idle pen began to trace
Along the edge some scribbled face.
The stream was dust! the landscape air!
For the rich banquet just spread there,
The board was now swept clean and bare!

Leaning back, Thus it is, he said,
The herd comes sweeping on my sight;

Ere one is taken, all are fled,
I leap from bright noon to midnight;

Ye who whole libraries have read,
Know not what 'tis one page to write.

Then changing the desponding tone,
Continued, But not this will bring

The fugitives back, from me gone.
Judgment, the power of Reasoning,
Who when fair Fancy takes to wing
Still sitteth lowly on the throne,
Tells me that toil alone will bind,
'To use the powers of my mind.

Genius (still but a fettered gift)
From labor's law is not exempt,
And he who waits the overflow,
Idly of the deep well below,
Or is content when he hath found
The ore that lies above the ground,
Shall not excel. We must dig deep,
And labor the mind's wealth to heap,
Or in its covered depths to find
What shall bring profit to mankind.
And how this calm enthroned Sense,
Doth to the list'ning heart dispense;
Its verdict on this world's renown!

Fame is a dweller in the street,
The public crier of the town,
No more! for when in some retreat
Like this, alone, I take my seat,
She followeth not, or melts to air
A form of vapor entering there,
And I am left as stripped and bare,
As when my name was all unknown.
That circle of our consciousness
Which lieth inmost, I do find
Her influence will not confess:

I thought 'twould reach it and would bind

The wound up, or that void would fill,
Which there do ache and hunger still ;
But Fame hath neither balm nor food,
It holdeth not the coveted good,
And lacks in this last want for me
All substance, bulk, solidity.

At this he placed me near the sheet
That laid before him written on,
And with these words my form did greet :

Thou whom all ills are heaped upon,
Whom none o'er all the world refuse,
And yet not one but doth abuse,
I hold it as my final thought,
Thou art the chief good to be sought.
For not the promise judging by,

But the performance, luring Fame
Cov'nants the soul's want to supply
And fails. Thou thing of lowlier name,
Askest not in thee to confide
For this, but giveth all beside.

And as for that—I know not what,
The thirst within, the sore, the leech,
The void, fair nature's counterplot,
I do believe no arm can reach,
Or balm can ease the aching spot,

And seeking makes, like search in hell,
Torture more unendurable."

I learned my sophist was not poor,
My virtue's grave expositor,
For ere another week was fled,
With many more deposited,
He placed me safe in Bank once more.

Now as I laid a time at rest,
In a strong vault that was replete
With bars and bolts no power might wrest,
No cause is it for scorn unmeet,
If in pure truth it be confessed,
I was grown great in self-conceit;
For looking back I plain could see,
The loftiest nimbly stooped for me,
And even the dullest in the land
Had wit my worth to understand.
So that those ages when unsought
'Midst pebble-stones had been my lot,
Were, like low lineage, forgot.

At length forth summoned to the light,
From the strong hold where I had lain,

I took, with hundreds more as bright,
My turn, and was paid out again.
Into strange hands I now was cast,
For by some seeming whim perverse,
My new lord* scarce had filled his purse,
When through a dark street he made haste,
And entering at a lowly door,
Was 'midst the children of the poor.
As the wan, suffering group stood by,
A tear slow gathered in his eye,
And welling o'er dropped silently.
Then, as with kind encouragement,
And gifts, he cheered those spirits faint,
I knew why he was thither sent.
Later, round his own fireside,
As by some bow of promise spanned,
Viewless, but felt, at eventide,
I gathered saw a happier band—
Not splendor, pomp, nor show were there,
The light of love the place made fair.
About the spread board did I see
The circle all with looks downcast,
Pause a brief moment rev'rently
Ere sharing in the glad repast,

* The money-loving Christian.

As though some hidden principle
Deeper than words, within might dwell.
Next, to a lofty building where

Went up a wide, commingling throng,
He bore me, with th' assembly there,

Lifting his voice in solemn song.
In short, a calm pervading sense,

Another spirit that he bore,
Told me there was a difference

Between him and those gone before;
Yet while new light around me beamed,
This difference against me seemed.

Thus was it till a season gone,
And closer observation won,
By nicest search I did behold,
Like dust upon the polished gold,
Spots the first glance had left untold.

And once discerned, my jealous eye,
Open and ever watchful nigh,
These that at first seemed specks, no more,
Began to spread the whole breadth o'er.
I learned, another influence.

Within his breast, the power to gain,
Warred day and night to drive Him hence,
Who now ruled o'er the soul's domain—

And like some strong, bold rebel chief,
(Or lingering taint of unbelief) -

Ever disturbed there, the King's reign.
Not by admitted principle,

But lapse indulged, some charity,
Some gift my master might spare well,
Was hidden oft while want passed by,
Or by that power which doth compel,
O'ercome, 'twas given grudgingly.

With secret longing, still he loved

This world's estate. The fear of want,
Or that by garners full removed,
The thought they knew on increase, proved

Thorns to the better covenant.
About this time it was, one day,
As he from suffering turned away,
There seemed before me, drawn apart,
A passage that revealed his heart.

Methought within its narrow space,

Clothed in pure white, upon a Throne,
One crowned sat: mild beauty, grace,
And light, serene around him shone,
Eyes looking from this world of care,
No vision e'er beheld more fair.

But as I gazed, one from beneath,
Who ever looked upon that crown,
Did in my sight a sword unsheath,
And war to cast the Monarch down,
Disquieted, robbed of repose,
His throne he kept alone by blows.
While thus was waged the perilous fight,
'Midst clashing discord, strife, and jar.
Fair forms, clothed like the Prince, in white,
Did seem to shrink and stand afar,
And written their fair brows above,
I saw these names, Peace, Joy, and Love!
Then did the vision dim and wane,
And to my sight 'twas dark again.

How long was now the interval,
Or by what chance the change befell,
Being hid from me, I cannot tell;
But when, as out of sleep aroused,
I conscious saw the light again,
'Twas in a lowly dwelling housed,
A cottage, standing 'midst a plain;
One spreading tree before the door,
Shadowed the little building o'er;

Bounding its narrow sward of green,
The simple "post and rail" were seen.

Across this sward, a winding way
Did to the lowly entrance pass,
Not broad and smooth—in curves it lay,
As traced by footsteps through the grass.

Within, two rooms inclosed were,
The first with chimney spreading wide,
Its table, bench, and white floor, bare;
The other with the old arm-chair,
That stood the window-ledge beside,
Was covered with rag-carpet fair.
Here of unpainted, ancient wood,
With stout, deep shelving, and glass door,
A cup-board in a corner stood,
Of curious shape triangular.

I, with five golden dollars more,
Laid there unkept by bolt or bar.

Within this still secluded place,
A poor, old woman* dwelt alone,
Of Afric's dusky hue and race.
Th' ascending and descending sun

* The true Disciple.

For her, all through the summer's day,
Sent his bright beams to where I lay—
They filled the room, around, o'erhead!
A canopy of radiance spread!

Toiling without, oft could I hear

The song that o'er her labor rose,
Sometimes a while she would forbear,

Would enter in, the low door close,
And kneeling by the old arm-chair,
Would utter words I knew not, there.

At evening, toward the radiant west,
As toward some bright hope would she look,
Then opening wide an ancient Book,

Would read there, and lie down to rest.
The Sabbath, merging from the night,
Filled her with peace and calm delight;
At times, slow wending on her way,
We knew not where, afar, that day,
One of us from her hard earned store,
She took that was returned no more.

Thus lived she, yet within her mind
I thought at length, upreared to find
Mine image as in all before:

But searching, calling there my name,
From its inmost recesses came

My own words back to me, no more!
As streams, that, rushing from their source,
Meet rocky barriers in their course,
When these at last are all subdued,
Flow 'midst those rocks in quietude—
So calm, unruffled, her peace flowed!
Not much of it the eye could tell,
Nor did she seem alone to dwell,
But as with one invisible.
One day, while cleansing busily,
She paused, and said, with lifted eye,
“I must sweep softly, brought so near,
For He, my Lord, my King is here!”
At length, as rose one summer's morn,
 Arching the east with leaden hue,
Amid the twilight, while were borne,
 The level beams the window through,
As she in silent musing sate,
That veil—that small mysterious gate,
Aside once more before me drew,
And bared her heart within, to view.

There I beheld, upon the Throne,
 That Prince whom I had seen before—
Still grace and glory round him shone;

I saw those white-robed beings there,
Not shrinking in dismay afar,
But joyful to him gathered near:
While he who did the sword unsheath,
Lay captive, bound in chains beneath.
Then saw I how this Prince ruled o'er
Both hearts—the first by constant war,
But here he reigned 'midst perfect peace!

That very night, while on her bed,
Though through the dark I heard no tread,
Thus spoke she as to one unknown:
"Oh, longed for, art thou come at last?
Slow were thy steps—infirm thy haste—
Yet is His chosen hour mine own!
I wait. Cast off this worn-out chain,
This prison-house of dust remove,
Release me, gently or with pain,
O Death, here ends thy troubled reign,
Now dawns heaven's endless day of love."
Then in the little room 'twas still,
No more the measured breath arose,
And when again light bathed the sill,
A cold form slept there in repose—
Surely 'twas sweet, no envious ill
Could waken it, or bitter foes!

SABBATH AFTERNOON.

ONE Sabbath afternoon in May,
When church and Sunday-school
Were out, and long and tapering lay
The shadows up and down my way,
And rose the evening cool—
By her dear hand, my little one
I led forth toward the setting sun.
Not 'midst the open fields were we,
Nor in the wild wood. On each side
But rows of houses could we see,
While by us passed unceasingly
Crowds like the river's tide;
But we were used to this, nor felt
Confined—as if we fetters wore,
For as our fathers had before
We in the city dwelt.

So as we walked, her hand in mine
Close covered there, (how near ties start
From out the soft touch, and entwine
Far in, around the parent's heart!)
She looking up asked o'er and o'er
Whither I now was leading her?
I answered not, but passing on
Still listened to her prattling tongue
Till the high dwellings all passed by,
A long, low wall stretched on the eye;
Then by a narrow gate in view
We to the space within passed through.

At the first glance it seemed to spread
A simple field of green around,
But as beyond the steps were led
'Midst silent solitude profound,
The eye might note, small hillocks rose,
Though covered all with freshest green,
With now, at twilight's deep'ning close
Shadows more darkened, laid between.
Up through the midst a wide smooth way
Amid this field of hillocks lay,
On each side in straight order stood,
Trees whose new dress was in the bud.

"My darling," now I gently said,
"Here one who loved you lieth dead—
Here your dear grandmother is laid."

She answered not, but presently
Stepping a little way apart
Stooped to a flower. "See, father, see!"
She cried—what I had meant to be
An armed shaft, reached not the heart!

Still passing on I came to where
The path ceased—mingling with the green,
Then helping her with reverent care
O'er those who laid to rest had been,
I found one mound amid all there.
"This is her grave," I said: "beneath,
She who once held you, sleeps in death—
Under this hillock she is laid;
She loved her Saviour—at his call
She trembled not: was not afraid,
But for him gladly left us all."
I looked if outwardly confessed,
The arrow yet had pierced her breast;
But though some undefined sense
Had hushed the sweet child's utterance,
She scarce knew what it was, nor whence.

Turning back, now, I gained once more
The gravelled path we trod before,
Still leading her close by my side:

Then pausing, 'midst the silent way,
I said, "She glád and happy died.

Now if to you were sent to-day
Sickness and suffering, so that I

Would stoop down to your bed and say
My darling one must die,
What would you tell me? Could you trust
In Jesus, laid here in the dust?"

Then with full tears about to start
She answered tremblingly and low,

Her voice choked by her swelling heart,
"Father, I do not know!"

Oh, not to me was given power
The fallen nature to renew!

I felt it then, and yearning more
Over this soul I turned my view

From the green graves around me there
Toward heaven, all helpless but in prayer.
I have not power. No, though above

All gifts I crave it for this one
My first born, heir of tenderest love,
God doth reserve it as his own.

I stood still, and was taught again,
The Lord—the Lord alone doth reign!

Yes, He doth reign, but have I not
His promises? “The seed of those

Who love him, never more forget
Delivered shall be from their foes;”

And can he, unheard, cast away

A whole life’s prayer by night and day?
No, glorious truth that he doth reign;

I step these faithless doubtings o’er:
He can renew this soul again,

Than I, he loves my children more,
And I believe, though they be led

Through want and suffering through life’s waste,
Whate’er the pathway they may tread

That his they all shall be at last:

Yea more, that they are his now, known
Where such their names have written down!

And oh, my soul, so prone to sleep
If this thy thirst be, this thy want,
How watchful wilt thou be to keep
Thy part in the blest covenant!

How to His presence wilt dwell near
Who loves the seed of those who fear!

The right hand or the treasured eye,
Though harmless else, if they would take
Aught from the power that lures on high
Thou'lt cut off—pluck out for their sake;
Then not for this world's heaped-up store
Chiefly thou'lt covet, but that grace
May be their portion—grace before
Riches or health, or honored place.
But oh, how diligent within,
How earnest, filled with constant care,
Thou wilt be evermore to win
God's priceless gift for them by prayer,
For all thy works short-coming are,
Thy strong, prevailing power is there.

LITTLE ELLIE.

"WHERE has little Ellie gone?

By the garden gate below
I saw her as the sun went down."

"No, mother, 'twas an hour ago,
I climbed the mount with you to bring
Water from the upper spring."

"Where is Bruno? Since last night
I erring, punished him for theft,
The dog has hidden from my sight."

"As the first grove above we left,
I thought beneath the Maple's shade,
Watching our steps I saw him laid."

"Go to the forest's edge, my dear,
And call your sister. She has strayed
To gather flowers. Sound loud and clear
Her name—she loiters somewhere near."

So spake the mother, and turned then
To her accustomed tasks again.
Upon the spotless board were spread
Fresh fruit and milk and new-made bread—
Soon upturned plates were by them found,
Three plates, then three seats grouped around:
One rudely made, a child's high-chair.
But had some eye been watching there,
It would have marked as each she placed,
Her restless look and step of haste.

“Down by the forest's edge I stood,
And called my sister loud and plain,
But, mother, from the dreary wood
Echo alone came back again.”
“Go rouse the neighbors! haste my child,
Nor stay by any cottage door,
But tell them in the forest wild
Ellie is lost!” Love's cheat was o'er,
And like a mountain stream forth burst
The fears her trembling heart had nursed.
But as he on his errand sped
She out of sight as swift was gone,
Shut in her chamber—by her bed
She all alone to pray knelt down.

They came from many a rugged hearth
 Ans'ring her call, nor tarried long—
Brave men who knew each dangerous path,
 Their hearts true as their arms were strong,
Nor they alone, the summons drew
Full many a hardy mother too,
 For Bertha was a widow. Here
Since when the fair handmaiden, Spring,
Did o'er earth's wintry bosom fling
Mantle of waving grass and grain,
 Within th' inclosed grave-yard near
Her husband slumbering had lain.
Still here she dwelt, yet not alone,
As dawn comes when the night is gone—
Her children grew and cheered her sight,
Late darkened, with reviving light.
The bough by storms torn from its place
Each tendril left fills larger space.

Then rose a gray-haired man and said,
 "I longest through the forest wild
Have roamed. Let my word be obeyed
 In seeking for the child.
Thou, Leonard, toward the deep Wind-gap,

Thou, Donald, toward the Water-fall
Direct your steps. I to the top

Of Thor will hasten; and ye all
Spread out between us, far and near
As when we hunt the autumn deer.
Then when each o'er his search has passed
We'll meet at Dripping Rock at last."

Full fifty voices answered back

"So will we do."

By many a track
Through the dark forest torches gleamed—
The lighted trunks vast pillars seemed!
Each hardy hunter hastened on
As though his own the loved, lost one,
And Bertha led her boy alone.

"Mother, I heard my sister say,
In the dark woods where no one sees
Were bushes filled with blackberries,
And that when you were gone away,
That she might bring them to you home,
She would go there and gather some."

"Why this before did you not speak?

My child, my child, you did not well."

"Surely my aching heart will break,

At first I did no notice take,

And since I feared to tell."

“Oh weep no more, her words forgot
I might myself have answered not,
So often prattled forth unmeant.
Though found or lost—whate’er her lot—
Thou only left, art innocent.”

They see the circle stretching far
Of blazing lights. None resting are,
But through the double night they move
A little army led by love.

“Ah, see the heavens, how calm, how bright,
Each unchanged planet sheds its light.
Think at this hour how oft I slept,
And safe my lost one by me kept,
Nor knew my blessings till bereft!”

At intervals the call would sound
From far off voices of her name,
Filling the solitudes around,
But back no wished-for answer came.

“Hark! was that not a human cry?
Hush! stop, and listen! All is still,

It sounds again, now brought more nigh—
’Tis but some startled whip-poor-will.”
Onward they pressed, till one faint streak
Showed the new day about to break,

And as grew bright the purple dawn,
All, filled yet with the midnight's gloom,
Met at the Rock appointed on.

Then spoke the gray-haired man again,
"Our zeal hath carried us too far ;

Such tender lamb on the smooth plain
Could not have reached where we now are,
Much less o'er ground so rude and bold,
Escaped so lately from the fold !

Back then, we have the light of day
Wherewith to search again our way.
Swift shall we our night's steps retrace—
Search ye each nook, each covered place—
Soon shall we see the lost child's face !"
Backward they turn with strength anew.
How may one trusting soul endue
Desponding hearts by words of faith !
Hope lives or dies oft by a breath.

Now all the forest multitude

Uprose as rose the morning sun,
Bird, insect, beast to seek its food—

Their day of glad toil was begun ;
But every joyous call or note
From locust's wing or warbler's throat,

Th' accustomed chord not reaching now
Of joy, touched that which deepens woe.
Her way, bereaved, the mother traced,
Wat'ring with tears the forest waste.

"What is it though ten thousand more
For love to me search every spot,
If the dear one they search now for
They find me not, they find me not?
Kindness methought I valued most,
But 'midst such suffering it is lost!"
Hark, mother, through the rising morn
The shrill blast of a hunter's horn,
The signal he should quick send back
Who first should cross the wand'rer's track;
Another swells the loud note too—
It rings afar the forest through!
Come, Bertha, haste! "Oh heart, be still."

This is the time we trembling wait
When known not which, comes good or ill,
But it is fixed, the doom of fate!
By the lone, lofty water-fall
That seems with joyous shout to call,
See where thy little one now sleeps:
Laid on the grass 'neath spreading-trees,
Near her a cup of blackberries,
While watch o'er both stern Bruno keeps!

She wakes not, but her gentle breath
Tells of the beating heart beneath,
And the rich hues upon her cheek
Of health and full deliverance speak.
The hunters, panting, thither press
From the surrounding wilderness ;
Their hopes yet captive held by fears,
They gaze upon the upturned face,
And turn to hide unwonted tears.
“Awake, my love, your mother see!”
Her eyes are opened toward the light—
She smiles. “Beside this bush last night,
Mother, an angel was with me.
But if I did sleep by the trees,
I filled your cup with blackberries!”
Take back thy child, thy tremblings o’er,
And learn to trust in Him whose arm
Doth shield the tender lambs. No more
Repine or doubt: dismay or harm
Nor come, nor go at thy command—
He watcheth, and his guiding hand
Leads her through perils ever near,
When far thou art as when thou’rt here.

Yet limit not his sovereign ways;
 Though not returned, but given to death
Thy darling were—still wouldst thou praise,
 If from this darkened world beneath
Thou couldst discern, how for her sake
And thine, he called her. We may take
Not yet the thick film from our eye,
 Nor rend the cloud that wraps this dust,
But in our brief captivity
 What is not seen, we may intrust!

THE POETIC FACULTY.

“THREE little ships I saw come up the steep
Far out at sea—they nearer drew to shore,
I saw him land with glad, exulting leap,
Who found this new world for mankind once more;
Stretching upon thy thought so far away,
It lies in my sight but as yesterday!

“Last eve I rose from the Pacific’s side,
And with the wind’s swift pinions to me lent,
With mighty swoop—with one flight, vast and wide,
Swept o’er the bosom of the Continent.
I saw all budding fields, all Nature’s boast,
Spread like a flowered robe, from coast to coast!

"Old forests, that all winter stripped and bare,
 Wailed to the tempest and were filled with gloom,
Wide desolate wastes that icy garments wear,
 And silent glens—were springing into bloom.
Unnumbered lovely haunts not known to men,
As one bower waken into life again!"

"In thy discourse," I asked, "what shall I find?"
 "Hearken," the voice replied, "and know my name:
I am that Spirit of the deathless mind,
 Which men do worship when they thirst for fame.
I am that Genius, given but to few,
Which yet, all never cease to seek and woo.

"This is the lesson my discourse would teach,
 That though my vision pierceth through all Time,
Though to the gates of Heaven my pinions reach,
 Though I may lift thy name to heights sublime,
Yet all these gifts, though they do seem to bless,
Cannot alone bring thee true happiness.

"Each rational soul—each insect of the air,
 Each sparrow 'midst a summer's forest leaves,
Hath its appointed place. He formed them there,
 Whose purpose lives in everything that breathes.
Thee, also, to thy task He now would bring,
Prepared by gifts—humbled by suffering!"

SEVERITY AND GENTLENESS.

WHILE slumber bound mine eyes, last night,
Methought that from some lofty height
An Eagle touched me in his flight!
I seized the bird, and struggling tried
T' imprison him fast by my side:
Long did he furious battle wage!
Hurt, I oft struck at him in rage!
But while I wounded him the more
Deeper my bleeding side he tore,
Until at length, I, strangely moved,
Stroked his fierce head as one who loved,
When lo, he ceased—he laid at rest,
Peaceful, serene upon my breast,
And I saw in the vision fair,
Now 'twas a Dove that nestled there!

SELF-CONCEIT.

CONCEIT a thousand forms will take,
Though we be humble—seeking right,
Some bandage for the eyes she'll make,
That blinds us in the very light.

If all our thirst is to be known—
The fool's idolatry of Fame,
She points where loftiest names have flown,
And whispers "Thy powers are the same!"

But when she finds a straggler weak,
From Life's path wand'ring o'er the plain
Pretending him she came to seek
She plieth swift God's name in vain.

There is, she says, A work reserved
For thee to do—the time is come—
Arise! thy weak arm hath been nerved—
Not for thy gain, but God alone.

Oh knew we not there is a Power
That hemmeth in our goings aside,
Faithful in our most faithless hour:
Following e'en when our steps backslide;

How could we ever hope to gain
The goal that seems removed so far,
Or 'scape the dangers of the plain,
Where no assisting angels are?

TO HIM WHO LOVES TO MEDITATE.

WHEN pausing by the way-side, filled with thought,
The inner chamber of thy heart is still,
And by the whisp'ring spirit thou art taught,
They are the blest who do their Maker's will;

When, as it were, by some celestial hand,
The veil is lifted up which hides from sight
The hill of Zion, and that pilgrim band
Who climb its pathway toward the realms of light;

And as their songs of praise come echoing back,
Thine eye doth follow them afar to find,
Among the trav'lers on that heavenward track,
Brothers and friends who have left thee behind;

When thy soul's rescue seems almost begun,
Looking aloft, she craves a portion there,
And stretching forth her arms she longs for one
Of the white robes which Jesus' followers wear;

Know that it is not of thyself they spring,
These deep unearthly longings. To thy heart
Full messages of love from One they bring,
Who woos thee thus, to choose "the better part!"

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